

**PATRIARCHAL DOMINATION ON NATURE AND WOMEN: AN ECOFEMINIST  
ANALYSIS OF ALICE WALKER'S POEMS**

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**Abstract**

*The aim of this study is to analyze the book titled "Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful" written by Alice Walker in 1985 from an ecofeminist point of view. The book is composed of 41 poems and two epigraphs. The analysis of the poems shows that the author overtly criticizes the colonizing powers who exploited the nature beyond its limits, taking the livelihood sources and resources of the native populations in the American continent. Moreover, the male domination over women is also criticized in the poems, with the woman reduced to the function of house chores and granted the role of obedience to the man. This analysis yields the result that the exploitation and oppression on the nature is comparable to the exploitation and oppression on the woman, which is the basic premise of ecofeminism. Nature and woman are regarded as the "other" in their relation to man, as a result of which man considers them as the objects he is "naturally" entitled to benefit from and dominate. This confirms Mies and Shiva's (1993) dichotomies of "man" vs. nature and man vs. woman, in which the former element tends to be acknowledged as the "natural" one and the latter is regarded as the one that is valued or devalued in its relation to the "natural" former one. All this points to the efforts the patriarchal system makes to sustain its existence and power.*

**Keywords:** *Ecofeminism, nature, women, patriarchal system, domination.*

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## DOĞA VE KADIN ÜZERİNDEKİ ATAERKİL TAHAKKÜM: ALICE WALKER'IN ŞİİRLERİNİN EKOFEMİNİST ÇÖZÜMLEMESİ

### Öz

*Bu çalışmanın amacı Alice Walker tarafından 1985 yılında yazılan “Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful” [Atlar Manzarayı Daha Güzel Gösterir]<sup>1</sup> başlıklı eseri ekofeminist bir bakış açısıyla çözümlemektir. Eser, 41 şiir ve iki epigrafi alıntidan oluşmaktadır. Eserde yer alan şiirlerin çözümlenmesiyle sömürgeci güçler tarafından Amerika kıtasındaki yerli halkların geçim kaynaklarının ellerinden alınmasının ve doğanın sınırlarının ötesinde sömürülmesinin yazar tarafından açıkça eleştirildiği görülmektedir. Ayrıca kadının ev işleri işlevine indirgenmesi ve erkeğe itaat etmesinin beklenmesiyle erkeğin kadın üzerindeki egemenliği de çözümlenen şiirlerde eleştirilen diğer bir durumdur. Bu çözümlemede, ekofeminizmin temel önermesi olduğu üzere, doğanın ve kadının sömürülmesinin ilişkili olduğu sonucuna varılmıştır. Doğa ve kadın, erkeklere göre konumlarında “öteki” olarak görülmektedir ve bunun sonucu olarak erkekler, doğayı ve kadını üzerinde “doğal” bir tahakküm sahibi olunacak ve onlardan faydalanılabilecek nesnelere olarak görürler. Bu bulgular, Mies ve Shiva'nın (1993) insan-doğa ve erkek-kadın dikotomilerini doğrulamaktadır. Bu dikotomilerde, birinci unsur “doğal olan” olarak görülmekteyken ikinci unsur, birinci unsur ile ilişkisine göre değer gören veya görmeyen unsur olarak kabul edilir. Tüm bu bulgular, ataerki düzenin varlığını ve gücünü sürdürürebilmek için ortaya koyduğu çabaları göz önüne sermektedir.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ekofeminizm, doğa, kadın, ataerki sistem, tahakküm.

### 1. Introduction

The millennium we are living in seems to have brought more mishaps than comfort. While the term “technology age” is the buzzword of the era, with all the ease technology has brought to our workplaces and home, from the super-machines called computers doing all transactions in a time span of a click of a button to robotic vacuum cleaners or kitchen utensils, that much of comfort is not without any hazards to the nature and human beings' well-being. Pandemic diseases such as swine flu, SARS, MERS, Ebola, Zika, and Covid-19 have exerted their negative effects to such a large extent that the

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<sup>1</sup> This poetry book has not been translated to Turkish yet. Therefore, the translation of the title belongs to the author of this study.

comfort and ease brought about by technological developments have been directed to the elimination of the viruses leading to such pandemics, which would bring about the biggest comfort and ease of life considering the current conditions of Covid-19. Not only that, the climate change we have been faced with is just another big problem awaiting to be actively addressed rather than only agreements signed. One of such agreements, Kyoto Protocol has been partly successful in reducing carbon dioxide emissions with estimates put at six or seven percent lower emissions than would be the case without this Protocol (Maamoun, 2019). Following the Kyoto Protocol against climate change, world leaders have recently signed Paris Agreement to address that problem, the results of which are yet to be seen in the following years. However, this slight improvement in the amount of carbon dioxide released has not shown its positive effects on our planet. With so many species declining or even going extinct due to the unfavorable conditions caused by the climate change, human beings have not been affected to a lesser degree, with water resources once thought to be bountiful and infinite declining to alarming rates all over the world, and masses of glaciers dissolving with potentially alarming effects on the lowlands like the risk of inundation in the not-so-distant future. All those problems of the new millennium have overwhelmed the sci-fi risk of alien invasion of the Earth. The position of technology against such problems has rarely been subject to direct or indirect criticism. While technology is the pivotal arm we possess against such problems, it would not be a far-fetched proposition that it has fallen short in curing those mishaps. A short-cut alternative, rather than even a temporary solution, let alone a permanent one, has been under way for human colonization of Mars, still utterly depending on the benefits that technology confers; however, even that alternative is far from reality in the short-run by today's standards. Therefore, while it is true that the current technology is far from solving the problems of the modern era, it is also true that the conditions leading to the development of technology are not purely innocent phenomena but could be considered to have triggered the human-induced natural problems.

All those problems of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, as listed above, are sure not the natural cycle of our planet, but rather they are human-induced problems. Human beings did not directly create those viruses, nor did they deliberately aim to destroy the nature. It is the activities of human beings to make the best of the natural resources economically that led to the natural destruction, and in this way destruction of the ecological balance. While the primitive hunter-gatherer groups moved to new lands to find new sources of diet, the industrialized nations did so in order to find new sources of gold mines or arable fields. Whereas the former ones were driven by the biological impulse to satisfy their hunger, the latter's motive was the non-biological passion to satisfy their sheer greed for economical superiority over other nations. This passion inevitably led to colonization of the countries rich in underground valuables and soil but poor in economic terms by industrialized nations. American continent was one of the first targets for Europeans following the discovery of the continent towards the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The European populations, already armed with guns and skilled in warcraft, arrived in Americas only to find vulnerable

native populations there without almost any history of warfare. Reportedly citing from Columbus' log of discovery of the Americas, Howard Zinn quotes that:

They [native Americans]... brought us parrots and balls of cotton and spears and many other things, which they exchanged for the glass beads and hawks' bells. They willingly traded everything they owned... They were well-built, with good bodies and handsome features... They do not bear arms, and do not know them, for I showed them a sword, they took it by the edge and cut themselves out of ignorance. They have no iron. Their spears are made of cane... They would make fine servants... With fifty men we could subjugate them all and make them do whatever we want. (1980, p. 5)

Due to the lack of warfare skills or even the tools for wars, native Americans easily fell prey to the Europeans, who further enslaved them to cultivate the land and paid them nothing or very little. However, America was not the only continent of colonial greed; the practice of colonialism was extended to African continent as severely, not to mention Australia and the Middle East. Formerly engaged in merchandise of raw materials and food items, the colonizing powers did not take long to get into industrialization. Beginning in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the United Kingdom, industrial revolution could be considered the turning point of world history. The wealth surplus that Europe enjoys today can easily be tied to the colonial practices overseas and the onset of industrialization within the continent, both of which favored only its own people while it meant slavery for the native people in colonized lands. What is more, the umbrella term of "Europe" was not a single entity that strived to benefit from those lands. Most nations in the continent went on to benefit from the resources in the colonized lands to unimaginable extents to be the utmost economic power, which turned out to be nothing more than a craze for infinite exploitation of finite natural resources and human labor. Yet, the *White Man*<sup>2</sup> was quick to recognize that even the maximum human labor was far from sufficient to produce the commodity in bulk, key to surplus of wealth lies in mass-production, though. As a result, the industrial revolution naturally paved the way for mechanization, which also necessitated technological tools and progress. Therefore, the technological developments that we enjoy today are not the products to facilitate general human well-being, but rather the end products of the process to satisfy *White Man*'s greed.

## 2. Ecofeminism Against the Exploitation of Nature and Women

The natural destruction we have been suffering particularly in the last two decades naturally followed the exploitation of nature. Over-use of the land to produce as much as possible, clearing the forests to open land for further cultivation, and harassment of water bodies to produce more of food and energy have led to an almost irreversible natural destruction. Moreover, the rush to mass-produce and

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<sup>2</sup> Here, the term "White Man" is used as a reference to the use of this term by Alice Walker (1985) in *Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful*, the poetry book used for data collection in this study. The sign "Man" is italicized by the author of this study as an allegorical reference to the general masculine language use.

gain the utmost benefits thanks to mechanization and automation in the production line has progressively put much more burden on the atmosphere with the hazardous gases released by factories, to be multiplied when accompanied by the waste into land or water bodies. “Industrialization, technological progress and the affluent life-style of the developed nations have precipitated the acceleration of environmental degradation worldwide” (Mies and Shiva, 1993, p. 277). As can be understood from this statement, the ecological crisis we are suffering from now is made worse by the economic activities of the industrialized nations. Moreover, the increase in the lifespan of human beings and an according population growth coupled with urbanization seem to have accelerated the natural degradation, as well (Taddese, 2001; Wenhua, 2004; Balanarayanan and Vetrivel, 2012; Lakshmana, 2021). Urbanization can also be considered one of the ill-effects of industrialization since factories and companies tend to be established in already accepted metropolises or important cities in order to find markets for the commodities. Once self-sufficient farmers working on their own lands, people go on to live in cities to find employment opportunities for the betterment of their lives now that the soil has been degraded and rural lifestyle will not make any good for their families anymore. This rush to the urbanized regions does good to no one but the already rich and powerful. The rich and powerful are in a quest to find customers who will work under the rich to buy the commodities they did not need in their rural lifestyle. This is analogous to the oppressor-oppressed relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. While this latter one is sustained cross-continent or cross-borders, the former is achieved within smaller areas. However, there is one thing in common that does never change: the oppressor bearing all privileges over the oppressed, be that between the colonizer and the colonized or between the urbanized rich and the recently urbanized poor.

Amidst all this class conflict, the discrimination between genders also took a new path with industrialization. The man, already *mis*acknowledged to be the powerholder in the family by social standards, though there should be no natural reason for that, was/is also seen the “naturally”<sup>3</sup> deserving party to work outside home and earn the money for the family’s survival. In this vein, the woman was/is “naturally” expected to be the worker within the house to do all the chores and deal with childcare. Women were/are only allowed to work outside the home environment when the man’s income did/does not suffice. This time, women were/are expected to accomplish two duties: working outside the home and working at home (Karl Marx, 2011, p. 379). This situation also created a new oppressor: the man. While the *White Man* was/is the patron, or the oppressor in the colonization malpractice, every man was/is considered the patron, or the oppressor in social dynamics. The exact analogy between these two oppressors dates back to “ecofeminism” of Mies and Shiva (1993), who draw a comparison between the oppression on the nature and women. This raises the question of who is to blame for all that oppression:

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<sup>3</sup> Here, “naturally” does not denote the physical features granted by the nature, but an allegorical term referring to the misperception in the society.

the answer can safely be tied to patriarchy. While patriarchy can simply be thought as the maintenance of male control in all social dynamics (in a narrow sense), it can be extended to cover a universal maintenance of the power in the already power-holding party (in a broader sense), who is “naturally” the man in all social strata. Therefore, what patriarchy favors is the continuation of power in White *Man*’s hands in the scope of this study. “The culture of the white man, universalized first through colonialism and then development, which sees the soil only in terms of territory to be conquered and owned” (Shiva, 1993, p. 105) lies at the heart of broader sense of patriarchy, while “the women can be called the internal colony of this system” (Mies, 1993, p. 58).

According to Mies and Shiva (1993, p. 3), “science and technology [are] not gender-neutral”, which refers to the privilege of one gender over the other, and with the introduction of the White *Man* defined so far in this study, this privilege should “naturally” be granted to the man. It is further stressed that “the relationship of exploitative dominance between man and nature, and the exploitative and the oppressive relationship between men and women [...] prevails in most patriarchal societies, even modern industrial ones” (Mies and Shiva, 1993, p. 3). It is overtly maintained here that just as the White *Man* learned to dominate and control the nature for *his* own benefits, so did *he* learn to dominate and control the woman. Here, two dichotomies, namely *man* vs. nature and *man* vs. woman, are presented, or in a way deconstructed by Mies and Shiva (1993), who further state that:

[M]odern civilization is based on a cosmology and anthropology that structurally dichotomizes reality, and hierarchically opposes the two parts to each other: the one always considered superior, always thriving and progressing at the expense of the other. Thus, nature is subordinated to man; woman to man, consumption to production and the local to the global, and so on (p. 5).

Based on this deconstruction, dichotomies like “man vs. nature; man vs. woman; production vs. consumption; global vs. local” always favor the former entity, which is considered the “natural” in collective memory while rendering the latter entities the “other”. One pitfall of dichotomies lies in the fact the latter entity is always valued or devalued by the former entity, leading the former to the “subject” position while characterizing the latter as the “object” of the former. Therefore, the nature becomes only an “object” or so to say a “commodity” for human beings just as the woman turns into an “object” and accordingly a “commodity” for man in line with this deconstruction. Moreover, “local” is also subordinated to the “global”, also an *ill*-product of colonialism, which is rationalized by the White *Man* based on the *casus belli* that *he* civilized the “savage” local cultures in distant parts of the planet, bringing them to the attention of the whole world and presenting them the chance to work and earn money as members of the globalized world. All in all, ecofeminism draws a parallel between the oppression of the nature and the woman in the hands of the *man* (Vance, 1993, p. 126), opposing to anthropocentrism and androcentrism respectively.

On the other hand, ecofeminism has been subjected to various criticisms. While Merchant (1980) sees the liberation of women as the pre-requisite for the liberation of the nature, Ottuh (2020, p. 177) opposes to this suggestion voicing doubts concerning the cause-effect relationship between the oppression of the nature and women, stating that the direction of the causality is still far from verification. Likewise, Sargisson (2001) objects to ecofeminism with the suggestion that it is too utopic to achieve its full potential. Moreover, Stearney (1994) suggests a gender-neutral metaphor to explain the relationship between the nature and the woman. However, Griffin (1997) states that the critiques of ecofeminism are confused by the statement that “women are either biologically or metaphysically closer to the nature” (p. 215) and argues that this is nothing more than a socially constructed perception. On the other hand, Warren (1997) expands the scope of ecofeminism defining it as “the position that there are important connections between how one treats women, people of color, and the underclass on one hand and how one treats the nonhuman natural environment on the other” (p. xi). Warren (1997) adds the issue of a person’s color and the economic conditions within the borders of ecofeminism. In this study, the poetry book titled *Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful* by Alice Walker (1985) is analyzed based on ecofeminist reading of the poems. However, it is important to note that rather than taking a “Mother-Nature” stance of ecofeminism in the analysis, poems are analyzed based on the comparison between the exploitation of the nature by the *White Man* and oppression of the women by man, the major premise of Mies and Shiva’s (1993) ecofeminist stance.

### **3. Alice Walker and Her Ecofeminist Approach**

Born to a poor family in Eatonton, Georgia in 1944, Alice Walker did not lead a comfortable childhood due to economic reasons and the racial segregation her family was subjected to. Losing one eye to a gunshot, she withdrew herself from the society, and she adopted reading and writing as her favorite pastime. Gaining the opportunity for education, she committed herself to improving the conditions of the black population. She is generally known as the author of the works portraying the problems of the black women (Gale, 1997, p. 2). Winning the Pulitzer Prize for her novel titled *The Color Purple*, Alice Walker is also the author of poems, short stories, and essays on the condition of black women. June (2015) relates Walker’s work titled *Am I Blue* among the frequently cited ecofeminist books and adds that “her literature still suggests that equality for all entails an understanding of the oppression of nature and the ‘Other’ animals” (p. 100). This clearly indicates the ecofeminist approach Walker adopts in her writings as can be confirmed in her proposition that “my activism-cultural, political, spiritual-is rooted in my love of nature and my delight in human beings” (Walker, 1997, p. xxii). Therefore, the poem book titled *Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful* is analyzed based on ecofeminist approach in this study. Specific contexts from poems with reference to the oppression of nature, oppression of women and the ways to save the nature are discussed here.

### 3.1. Contexts with oppression on nature

The poetry book titled *Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful* is composed of 41 poems, and it begins with an epigraph from the book titled *Lame Deer, Seeker of Visions* from the character John Fire Lame Deer, a Lakota holy man from Sioux, groups of Native American tribes. The epigraph says:

We had no word for the strange animal we got from the white man – the horse. So we called it šunka wakan, “holy dog”. For bringing us the horse we could almost forgive you for bringing us whiskey. Horses make a landscape look more beautiful. (Walker, 1985, p. V)

In this epigraph, the term “white man” refers to the colonizing European powers who settled in American continent and dominated the whole region to *his* own benefit. John Fire Lame Deer implies that they did not know of the animal horse before they encountered the white man. Moreover, this animal is granted sacred attributes in the indigenous language as can be understood from its English equivalent “holy dog”. The contribution of these animals to the landscape’s beauty in this context leads to the anticipation that the poems in the book could be analyzed in terms of the author’s love for nature.

This assumption is confirmed in detailed reading of the poems in the book. The author makes frequent references to the oppression of the nature by human beings in the poems. Apart from the poems, the author also makes a reference to other literary works to show the oppression of the nature. Below is a reference to the book titled *Black Elk Speaks* from the character Black Elk, a Lakota medicine man from the subtribe Oglala, composed of Native American people.

The Wasichus did not kill them to eat; they killed them for the metal that makes them crazy, and they took only the hides to sell. Sometimes they did not even take the hides, only the tongues; and I have heard that fire-boats came down the Missouri River loaded with dry bison tongues... And when there was nothing left but heaps of bones, the Wasichus came and gathered up even the bones and sold them. (Walker, 1985, p. 47)

In this context, the term “Wasichu” is defined with a footnote by the author as “Wasichu in Sioux means ‘he who takes the fat’” (Walker, 1985, p. 47), thereby equating Wasichu to the *White Man* who colonized Sioux’s land and *robbed* them of their valuables. The use of the masculine pronoun “he” should not be a random choice here since it is the man who always plunders the environment for his demands as if the nature were his slave. Killing the buffalos for their hides (the raw material for fur coats) and their tongues (a delicate food item particularly popular as of 1800s) in great numbers, the Wasichus earned money from these two commodities. The term “the metal” in the context refers to coin, which “makes them crazy” since the colonizer arranges all its activities for the sake of money. What is more, when they cannot find any more buffalos to kill for their hides and tongues, they still make money from what they ignored in the presence of these two valuable commodities: the bones of buffalos. As can be understood

from this reference in the book, the *White Man* disrupted the ecological balance of the faraway lands seeing the nature as *his* object and the “other” that should serve to fulfil *his* needs. That oppression on nature is also integrated into Walker’s poems. In the poem titled “Songless”, the context “[h]ow to transport/ food/ from watering hole/ to watering/ hole/ has ceased to be/ a problem/ since the animals/ died/ and seed grain shrunk/ to fit the pocket”<sup>4</sup> (Walker, 1985, p. 27). This context clearly shows the *ill-effects* of Wasichus’ exploitation of the nature. It can be understood that they killed *valuable* animals as greedily as to put an end to their existence and violated the principles of ecological balance, thereby destroying the production capacity of the land to grow food. As in the reference to *Black Elk Speaks*, *White Man* considers the nature *his* object to use infinitely. Anything belonging to species other than the *man* is regarded as the *natural* commodity to be exploited infinitely.

Besides the animals, the land is also exploited beyond its capacity by the *White Man* in Walker’s poems. In the poem titled “Each One, Pull One”, the context “[w]e do not love their efficiency/ Or their power plants/ We do not love their factories/ Or their smog/ We do not love their television programs/ Or their radioactive leaks” (Walker, 1985, p. 51) shows the colonizer *White Man* built power plants, which are established with significant threats to the ecology, and factories, which release toxic substances as the waste to the environment killing species of animals and the productivity of the land, as a result of which smog came out polluting the air human beings depend on for their survival. Inevitably, those constructions and operations lead to “radioactive leaks”, which menace the lives of all living things, human or nonhuman. This criticism of the natural degradation by the *White Man* is also encountered in the poem titled “Who” with the context “Who has not been/ invaded/ by the Wasichu?/ Not I, said the people/ Not I, said the trees/ Not I, said the waters/ Not I, said the rocks/ Not I, said the air” (Walker, 1985, p. 54). The *White Man* invaded trees, water bodies, and even the air besides human beings. The trees were cut to open land for agriculture; water bodies were polluted to release the toxic substances from the factories or to produce energy; and the air was polluted with the dangerous chemicals given off by the *productive* factories. While anything considered nonhuman is regarded his object by the *White Man*, this context makes it clear that he also invaded the native people, humans but *other* than the *White Man*’s color or race. Finally, in the poem titled “No One Can Watch The Wasichu”, the author complains that “He’s scalping/ the earth/ till she runs/ into the ocean” (Walker, 1985, p. 60). In this context, *he* refers to the *White Man* and is constructed as the subject of the sentence. The “earth” is given as the object of the Wasichus not only in the syntactical configuration of the sentence but also as an ecological criticism. As the author uses the pronoun “she” to refer to the “earth”, exploited by the *White Man*, this context could be considered to take the author’s stance from an ecological criticism to an ecofeminist criticism, which relates the exploitation of nature to the exploitation of women. All in

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<sup>4</sup> In the examples here and hereafter from the poems, “/” is used to show the end of the line in the poems in the book.

all, the author can be claimed to have adopted an ecological stance in the poems to demonstrate the damage created and incurred by the colonizing *White Man* to the nature.

### 3.2. Contexts with oppression on women

As a feminist author, particularly drawing attention to the unfavorable conditions of the black women, Alice Walker also wove the poems with the contexts on the patriarchal exercises on women. In the poem titled “Remember”, the context “I am the girl/ holding their babies/ cooking their meals/ sweeping their yards/ washing their clothes/ Dark and rotting/ and wounded, wounded” (Walker, 1985, p. 1) demonstrates the condition of women reduced to the function of doing the house chores like bearing and taking care of babies, cooking, sweeping, and doing the laundry to satisfy “their” (men’s) needs and demands. Just as the *White Man* in the preceding section regards the nature as *his* object, the man, regardless of color or race, also considers the woman as his object, and the “other” human being. The term “wounded” could be a reference to a physical or emotional wound caused by men. This context implies that just as a doll or a toy car is an object to a child to do whatever that child wants with that toy, be it animating a car crash, throwing it at the wall, or tearing it apart, so is a woman an object to a man. Another object position of the woman to the man is narrated with the context “He began/ to describe/ the women:/ Well, one woman/ when she smiled/ had shiny black/ lips/ which reminded him/ of black legs/ (vaselined, no doubt),/ her whole mouth/ to the poet/ revolutionary/ suddenly/ a leg” (Walker, 1985, p. 65) in the poem titled “Well”. The man, as the subject, describes the woman in line with how she is seen to his eyes. In this context, a woman is portrayed as an object to satisfy the sexuality of the man. Even a natural reflex or deliberate action, smile is connected with lips and “vaselined legs” with sexual associations by man. When the man smiles, this is quite a *natural* reaction to the stimuli around; however, it is nothing more than a seductive action when a woman smiles just because she is the “other” for man. As another patriarchal judgment valuation or devaluation, the context “a whistling woman and a crowing/ hen would surely come to/ no good end” (Walker, 1985, p. 22) in the poem titled “Mississippi Winter IV” makes it clear that a woman is not expected to make any noise or voice when the man is around. Drawing an analogy between the woman not obedient to that expectation and the hen making noise (just because a hen is a feminine animal and it is the sole responsibility of the rooster, a masculine animal, to utter voice or make noise by patriarchal expectations, which are even extended to the animal species), the author shows the extent of the oppression on women by the patriarchy. Therefore, the patriarchal system is portrayed and at the same time criticized as the determining power for the valuation and compatibility of human actions with the system’s sustainability. With these contexts, the author goes on to adopt a feminist criticism following the ecological criticism in the preceding section, which makes the reader realize that the *White Man*’s thirst for the exploitation of the nature has taken on the form of exploitation of women, the major premise of ecofeminism as adopted in this study.

### 3.3. Contexts on saving nature

With the criticism on anthropocentrism and androcentrism, Walker (1985) also suggests solutions to save the nature, which will also save the woman if accomplished since these solutions are not mechanical or technological applications but can be achieved only through simple steps. In the poem titled “We Alone”, the author shows the way to survival of the nature with the context “Feathers, shells/ and sea-shaped stones/ are all as rare/ This could be our revolution:/ To love what is plentiful/ as much as/ what’s scarce” (Walker, 1985, p. 12). According to the author, the *White Man* is always in search of benefit which can only be maximized if rare natural resources are exploited and sold. However, the solution to compassion and love for bountiful things lies in the valuation of those things as much as scarce *objects* of the nature without any consideration to their economic value. Economic value is the driving factor for the *White Man*’s exploitation of nature. The “shells” or “stones” might not bear any economic value, but they are no less valuable than scarce *objects* if the ecology is loved for how it looks to the human eye rather than how much it could fill the pockets with the sought-after metal coins. Another solution comes in the poem titled “Well” with the context “I liked/ especially/ the one/ that said/ the revolution/ must/ liberate/ the cougars, the trees,/ and the lakes (Walker, 1985, p. 64). The animals killed for the economic value of the parts of their bodies, the trees cut for maximum benefit, and the lakes over-used with the same motive must be saved through “revolution”. The revolution in this context might be a reference to the Green Revolution of the 60s and 70s, aiming to maximize the agricultural yield through mechanization and new methods of cultivation, which are also detrimental to the land and the ecology. Therefore, the Green Revolution must be adapted to the liberation of nature rather than over-use of the available resources according to the author.

End of the colonization practices is also suggested as a solution to the liberation of the environment in the poem titled “On Sight” with the context “Trees of the desert have arms/ All of which are always up/ That is because the moon is up/ The sun is up/ Also the sky/ The stars/ Clouds/ None with flags” (Walker, 1985, p. 44). As the moon, the sun, the sky, the stars, and the clouds have not been colonized by the *White Man*, they are still there with no destruction of the habitat. Likewise, desert areas are not colonized just because there are no valuable lands for cultivation, no water resources to over-use and no human beings to work for the colonizers. If the colonized areas were left to their own like the sun or the moon without any “flags”, meaning without any established colonizing countries, the nature would renew itself and regain its liberation. In the poem titled “These Days”, the author does not lose her hope for the liberation of the nature with the repetition of the context “Surely the earth can be saved for” giving the following names: “Belvie/ Robert/ Elena/ Susan/ Sheila/ Gloria/ Jan/ Rebecca/ us” (Walker, 1985, p. 70-79). As a result, despite all the problems of domination over the nature by the *White Man*, this ecological crisis could be solved if nature were not considered an *object* of economic gains by human beings. Just as the departure from objectification of the nature could liberate the ecology,

so could putting an end to the objectification and otherizing attitudes to women liberate them, which is the long-sought proposition of ecofeminism.

#### 4. Conclusion

In this study, the poetry book titled *Horses Make a Landscape Look More Beautiful* by Alice Walker (1985) was analyzed based on the ecofeminist approach to literary texts. Alice Walker, known for her feminist stance particularly with regards to the black women, was found to have adopted an ecological criticism of the *White Man* colonizing the lands of the Native Americans, incurring almost irreversible damage to the land, water, and air to make the best of natural resources. As a result of the analysis of the contexts with ecological criticism in poems, the nature was seen to be an object of the colonizing powers, who considered themselves entitled to kill the animal and plant species for their own economic gains, be it to export the materials or food items extracted from animals or open land for more extensive farming or cultivation. In this sense, the *White Man* considered anything other *himself* as the “other”, exploiting the finite masses of “others” in the nature as if they were infinite. However, Walker does more than just addressing the problems of the nature created by the colonizing powers; she demonstrates her hope for the liberation of the nature, as well. Walker (1985) states that nature can be saved for the future generations as long as it is appreciated for its bounty rather than only focusing on what is scarce. The items limited in nature are already more valuable for the *White Man* since they are sold for higher prices than the readily found items. However, if the *White Man* also acknowledges the rights of the nature, and thereby gives up exploiting the nature for its economic value, our next generations can also live on this planet.

Besides the natural destruction by *White Man*, Walker (1985) also voices her opposition to the oppression of women by men. The patriarchy’s portrayal of women as the “other” expected to do the house chores or keep quite in the presence of men is overtly criticized in the author’s poems. Moreover, association of women with the sexual desires of men is another point opposed by the author. Just as the *White Man* oppressed and exploited the nature, so does the man oppress and exploit the woman in line with the teachings and expectations of the society, which are far from natural attributes, but rather only socially constructed norms. Therefore, the oppression of the nature and the woman is addressed as the sought-after sustainability condition of the patriarchal system, which is the starting point for ecofeminist criticism. In this study, patriarchy is taken in a broader scope of “oppressors” who only run after the sustainability of their power and dominance, thereby rendering themselves as the subject and considering anything -human or nonhuman- as their object. As such, both the *White Man* stripping the colonized tribes off their living conditions and the common man claiming rights and privileges over the “other gender” are the governing bodies of the patriarchal system. Ecofeminists relate the liberation of women to the liberation of nature as both are oppressed by the same dominant power. Mies and Shiva (1993) state that “[i]n defying this patriarchy, we are loyal to future generations and to life and this

planet itself. We have a deep and particular understanding of this both through our natures and our experience as women” (p. 14).

All in all, the struggles and the oppression women are exposed to are brought into the limelight by all feminist approaches. However, it is ecofeminism that directly addresses the comparable oppression of the nature in the hands of *men*, suggesting the oppression on the nature is related to the suppression and oppression on women. The liberation of one could also pave the way for the liberation of the other. However, it is not that one should be given the precedence, but rather both should be liberated synchronically.

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