

Humans, Nature, and Ecofeminism in Selected American Literary Works: Linking Theory to Practice

*Abdullah F. Al-Badarneh, Shadi S. Neimneh, Abdullah B. Al-Sheik Hasan **

ABSTRACT

This study investigates ecofeminism as a reconstructionist theory that aims to reform society. The researchers claim that ecofeminism is a continuation of the philosophy of the nineteenth-century American transcendentalism. Though it emerged in the late twentieth-century women movements, ecofeminism, as the researchers argue, had its roots earlier in American transcendentalism as demonstrated in selected literary works. The article highlights the relationship between humans and non-humans in Ralph Waldo Emerson's philosophical essay, "Nature" (1836), Henry David Thoreau's book *Walden* (1854), and Walt Whitman's poem "Song of Myself" (1855). Furthermore, in order to demonstrate that the nineteenth-century transcendental philosophy constitutes the seeds of the twentieth-century ecofeminist thought, this article investigates such ecofeminist ideas in the American novels of Sarah Orne Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896) and in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) that have transcendental themes. In these novels, much focus is given to the efficiency of ecofeminist beliefs in interconnectedness and interdependence of all members of society in order to have a healthier society. The importance of this study comes from recognizing that ecofeminism can be a successful theoretical standpoint for diagnosing the problem responsible for such divisions between man and woman and between culture and nature and for offering a way out.

Keywords: Ecofeminism, gender, capitalist patriarchy, Nineteenth-century American Literature, Transcendentalism.

Introduction

The theory of ecofeminism, if carefully taken into consideration, can offer answers to the complex status of women and nature in relation to patriarchy and capitalism. In the introduction to their book entitled *Ecofeminism* (1993), Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva describe the motive behind their work as an "optimistic belief that a search for identity and difference will become more significant as a platform for resistance against the dominant global forces of capitalist patriarchy, which simultaneously homogenizes and fragments" other groups including women, nature, and the non-white (p. 2). They proceed to state that their aim is to emphasize diversity as an alternative to patriarchal hierarchy and duality by addressing "the inherent inequalities in world structures which permit the North to dominate the South, men to dominate women, and the frenetic plunder of ever more resources for ever more unequally distributed economic gain to dominate nature" (p. 2) and legitimize such oppression and domination. Dheyaa Alwan refers to the noticeably rigid and traditional representations of women all through the ages of "the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries" that have led to "the loss of moral conduct of the modernism that evaded the earlier decades of the 20th century" (807). Ecofeminism seeks to change such negative stereotypical thought about women and their role in society.

Ecofeminism, as the researchers prescribe, is reconstructionist in the sense that it accurately diagnoses the entangled gender-related issues and offers resolutions that would create harmony, love, equality, and peace among humans themselves and between humans and nonhumans. Jette Nhanenge (2011) points out that "All ecofeminists agree that there are essential connections between the unjustified dominations of women, Others, and nature, but they differ about the nature of those connections" (p. 99). Therefore, the goal of ecofeminism, as demonstrated in this

* Hashemite University, Jordan. Received on 16/9/2018 and Accepted for Publication on 8/1/2019.

article, is to reach a contact zone that is devoid of hierarchies. It is the responsibility of ecofeminists to raise awareness of the validity of this theory in solving these problems. Here, the researchers join Carin Cross (2018) in her belief that "ecofeminism and an ethic of care can challenge the patriarchal system and the dualistic relationships which it creates" (p. 29). Of course, this ethic of care is given to all earthly beings (Cross, p. 28).

The researchers contend that ecofeminism forms—to a large extent—a continuation of the philosophy of the nineteenth-century American transcendentalist thought that transcends the limits of materialism into more intellectual and spiritual realms. Analyzing such ecofeminist principles in different selections of literary genres and works demonstrates such thought. Accordingly, this article examines the relationship of humans to nonhumans as a complete ecosystem in a variety of nineteenth-century American transcendentalist literary works that include Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Nature" (1836), Walt Whitman's "Song of Myself" (1855), and Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (1854). Furthermore, in order to demonstrate that the nineteenth-century transcendental philosophy constitutes the seeds of the twentieth-century ecofeminist thought, this article investigates such ecofeminist ideas in the American novels of Sarah Orne Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896) and in Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876). Such selection of diverse literary works reflects the unique American experience in laying out the theory of transcendentalism and how we find this theory helpful to produce a healthier society when combined to ecofeminism. The article as well stresses the efficiency of ecofeminist beliefs in interconnectedness and interdependence in order to have a healthier society. The theory of transcendentalism offers the context that has produced the theory's idealism as long as human and nonhuman relations exist. Through undermining cultural and social dualisms and hierarchies, ecofeminism, as the researchers argue, proves to be a successful theoretical standpoint for diagnosing the problems responsible for such divisions between humans and nonhumans and between culture and nature.

Such emphasis on the continuation of the ecofeminist thought that is well-rooted in American Transcendentalism fills a huge gap in modern scholarship. Transcendental literary works used to be examined as merely transcendental. Studying these selected literary works from an ecofeminist perspective shows that the nineteenth-century transcendentalists had a prospective vision prophesying the emergence of the ecofeminist thought. After examining the bulk of modern scholarship on Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman, the researchers contend that the research conducted, for the most part, covers conventional themes such as man and nature, freedom, faith, divinity, and aesthetics. In one of these studies, Sean Meehan compares Emerson to Thoreau in terms of their idealism and empiricism. He is concerned with "the ways that Emerson can now serve to further our explorations in ecocriticism" (p. 215). The current study takes Meehan's assumption further and demonstrates that the seeds of ecofeminism are earlier rooted in Transcendentalism. Abolishing the hierarchies and binaries between humans and nonhumans is seen by the researchers as the first step or necessary condition to eliminate the same hierarchies and binaries between man and woman. Janice Trecker investigates Whitman's "Song of Myself," focusing on the concept of the democratic hero. She points out that "this conviction of our divinity naturally colors his views of God and death" (p. 17). Such transcendental thought, examined by Whitman and other transcendentalists, will be further developed and read in the light of ecofeminism.

The researchers also assume that the roots of ecofeminism can be detected in nineteenth-century American novels with transcendental themes and settings such as *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* (1876) and *The Country of the Pointed Firs* (1896). Surprisingly, modern scholarship has researched such novels conventionally, handling various themes of gender, empowerment, racism, naturalism, and faith. However, none of them examines such literature as a precursor of ecofeminism. Li-Hsion Amanda Liu conducts a study in which she investigates different issues of race, justice, and social criticism. Her research explores "the underlying similarities between naturalism and crime writing" (p. 55). The current study considers the themes of crime and justice differently through the lenses of ecofeminism. Kathryn Leenay conducts an MA thesis, entitled "Sarah Orne Jewett: Transcendence in Nature," in which she analyzes the natural settings in the novel that allow characters "to transcend apparently conventional human limitations such as physical and emotional isolation from community, linear time, traditional Christian religions, and gender" (1). Our study analyzes a further development that abolishes hierarchies and bridges gaps between man and woman and between humans and nonhumans.

1. Theoretical Standpoint:

Mies refers to the dichotomous concepts of transcendence and immanence within the patriarchal belief that the former belongs to the realm of the father and the latter belongs to the realm of the mother or the female other. Immanence means immersion into life, into the realm of the matter while “freedom, self-determination, higher values and culture can be reached only by transcending this immanence” (p. 225). This culture is described by Cross as “hierarchical and fragmented” (p. 28). But a question arises here: how can women reach transcendence and undermine such hierarchies? Mies tries to answer the question by focusing on women’s emancipation, “which is self-determination through freely chosen actions and projects, such as careers and social and cultural activity, rather than housework and childcare” (p. 225) rendering men and women as equal in a transcendental existence.

The stereotypical notion that women are closer to nature is a male construction that aims to oppress and inferiorize both of them as “others” in order to exploit their nurturing capacity and to background their contribution to the progress of humanity. Val Plumwood argues that this association between women and nature “is produced by exclusion” (p. 20) of women from the realm of culture that is dualistically constructed as the domain of the male, reason, power, and intellect. Therefore, women and nature are lumped together in terms of oppression and “backgrounding,” which means denying any male dependency on women and nature in the process of patriarchal production and success. In this way, women and nature become mere instruments that facilitate men’s work and achievements. Plumwood refers to Irigaray’s statement that “women are the ‘environment’- they provide the environment and conditions against which male ‘achievement takes place” (p. 22). Ecofeminists reject such association between women and nature and deconstruct it.

On the other side, ecofeminists conceptualize the relationship between nature and humans as an interconnected web. The theme of interconnectedness of humans with nature is a major premise of ecofeminist theory. Valuing both human and non-human nature on equal grounds creates an ideal existence that is based on relationship, union, and communal cooperation. Life, in this sense, becomes an interconnected web rather than a dualism based on anthropomorphism, a worldview that values humans over the non-human nature. Consequently, respecting nature entails a land ethic that reinforces our belonging to nature and the land and stops the commodification activities that endanger and pollute nature. In *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference* (1996), David Harvey seconds Aldo Leopold, American ecologist and environmentalist, in his call for a change in the capitalist mode of production that uses the environment as an object solely valuable for its profitability. As he points out, “We abuse land because we regard it as a commodity belonging to us. When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect” (Qtd. in Harvey, p. 120). It is obvious here that man can use the land, but what seems necessary is showing “love and respect” to its biospheric existence. In order to achieve the goal of ecofeminism in establishing a healthy, well-balanced ecosystem, ecofeminists endeavor to abolish hierarchies and dualisms by promoting interrelationship and interdependence between man and woman and between nature and culture.

2. Interconnectedness and Biocentrism in "Nature" and *Walden*:

In "Nature," Emerson emphasizes the point that humans are spiritually connected to nature since nature helps man communicate with the Eternal Spirit. Emerson’s view of nature becomes one of divinity. To him, nature is a goddess, and it “is the organ through which the universal spirit speaks to the individual, and strives to lead back the individual to it” (p. 31). Emerson accentuates the idea that we, humans, are part of nature but not superior to it, and nature is not a lifeless object existent for our service as he says, “throughout nature, spirit is present; one and not compound, it does not act upon us from without, that is, in space and time, but spiritually, or through ourselves: therefore, that spirit, that is, the Supreme Being, does not build up nature around us, but puts it forth through us” (p. 32). Spirituality, in this sense, includes spirit and matter, the here and the hereafter, and the world of the senses. It is, according to Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva, “centered on and thus abolishes the opposition between spirit and matter, transcendence and immanence” (p. 17), having a society that is based on interdependence and completeness.

Ecofeminists are not against using nature’s resources to the benefits of humanity, but they are concerned about the misuse and abuse of nature’s qualities of giving and nurturing. Emerson describes the benevolence of nature to humans

as a “divine charity” (p. 7), whereby everything in nature, such as water, soil, animals, fire, stones, etc., is designed to their service and profit. In this sense, nature is an organic unity or one body nurturing humans. Emerson says, “The wind sows the seed; the sun evaporates the sea; the wind blows the vapor to the field; the ice, on the other side of the planet, condenses rain on this; the rain feeds the plant; the plant feeds the animal; and thus the endless circulations of the divine charity nourish man” (p. 7). It is evident that life on Earth is an interconnected web where humans and nonhumans depend on each other for existence. Therefore, humans have to establish this connection with nature based on love and respect, and they have to disregard the materialistic value of nature that blinds them from having this connection established.

Valuing money over nature has caused such exploitation of natural resources to the degree of depletion because money is “the basic (though by no means the only) form of social power. It is therefore a means to achieve, liberate, and even emancipate human desires” (Harvey, p.151). However, such reliance on money as a form of social power can be abusive especially if “those who have it can use it to force those who do not to do their bidding. This power asymmetry in social relations ineluctably connects to the inequities in environmental relations in exactly the same way that the project to dominate nature necessarily entailed a project to dominate people” (Harvey, p.155). Thus, it is a polarity principle that governs human and nonhuman relations. This principle produces such differences and hierarchies.

Likewise, the way Thoreau describes his relationship to the natural elements around him reflects the ecofeminists' view of this world as a biosphere rather than an anthropocentric world in which only humans are valued. Thoreau gives much importance to animals and trees as he speaks about them with all respect and value. Moreover, he describes himself as a friend to the trees, “I was more the friend than the foe of the pine tree, though I had cut down some of them, having become better acquitted with it” (p. 138), as if he takes the permission to do what he did, and it is important to remember that he has cut some of the pine trees for necessity to build up his home. He also speaks about the animals in a way that makes them partners to humans as he establishes a common ground between the two, that is, the earth and the spring in which all is happy, “I heard the lark and pewee and other birds already come to commence another year with us” (p. 135). After he is done with work in the field, Thoreau spends his time studying and observing nature, the birds, the animals, the pond till he achieves oneness with nature, “I go and come with a strange liberty in Nature, a part of herself” (p. 200). His solitude becomes his channel through which he can communicate with nature. It is not solitude in the literal sense; rather it is a way of communication and self-sufficiency in nature.

In *Walden*, Thoreau establishes a very important ecofeminist tenet, that is, diversity, interconnection and interdependence of humans with nature, “Nature and human life are as various as our several constitutions” (p. 112). He views the natural elements such as the sun as taking part and contributing to our existence, “the same sun which ripens my beans illumines at once a system of earths like ours” (p. 112). Moreover, nature provides the necessary materials of house construction and furnishing.

On the spiritual level, nature provides truthfulness in opposition to the world of culture and civilization that cares for appearances and falsehood. This is the real reason why Thoreau moves out to live in the woods, “I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived” (p. 172). Such connectedness with the natural world provides him with a philosophical stand by which he can understand himself and the world around him.

Thoreau establishes the same principle of interconnectedness among humans as he speaks of the idea of social organism. In his thought, all professions in the community are worthy, and we should not underestimate any job since they all complete each other as he says, “we belong to the community. It is not the tailor alone who is the ninth part of a man; it is as much the preacher, and the merchant, and the farmer. Where is this division of labor to end? And what object does it finally serve?” (p. 139). Of course, the answer is known; it serves the capitalist system.

One of the ecofeminist elements in *Walden* is the connection of development with pollution and diseases and nature with freshness and health as Thoreau points out that he prefers to “sit on a pumpkin and have it all to myself, than be

crowded on a velvet cushion. I would rather ride on earth in an ox cart with a free circulation, than go to heaven in the fancy car of an excursion train and breathe a malaria all the way" (p. 132). Thoreau is also concerned with the issue of exploiting nature in a way that serves the interests of capitalists and all is done in the name of development and progress. This development depletes the natural resources and mechanizes production in a way that destroys nature's production and diversity. In *Staying Alive* (1988), Shiva argues that the resultant "fragmentation and uniformity as assumed categories of progress and development destroy the living forces which arise from relationships within the 'web of life' and the diversity in the elements and patterns of these relationships" (p. 3). Therefore, humans have to stop these exploitative activities that rob nature of its essences. Metaphorically, Thoreau represents one of those capitalists who are harvesting and trading ice as a greedy man who "in order to cover each one of his dollars with another, he took off the only coat, ay, the skin itself, of Walden Pond in the midst of a hard winter" (p. 322). Capitalism is promoting such view of nature as resources available for exploitation since it encourages competition, privatization, emancipation, and self-realization. Shiva criticizes such mode and describes it as a "reductionist" that "reduces complex ecosystems to a single component, and a single component to a single function" (*Ecofeminism*, p. 25). Harvesting Walden's ice reduces the pond to one function, that is, wealth accumulation. This mode serves a certain class of people who are the capitalists, but the poor and women will be crushed by such policy. However, what is interesting is that nature is able to sustain itself and to retaliate that a large amount of the ice men will take out of the pond will melt and return back to it and "it never got to market" (p. 323). Nature here can resist such exploitation of its resources.

3. The Universal Man in Whitman's "Song of Myself":

The theme of interconnectedness among humans themselves and between humans and nature is addressed in Whitman's poem as well. According to his view, relations on Earth are complementary rather than dichotomous. In her article, "Learning to Live with Differences: The Challenge of Ecofeminist Community," Judith Plant (1997) calls such relationships "eco-community" that is "a way of being in this world that reflects respect and love for all forms of life and has these sentiments as fundamental ethics. Practically speaking, this term means learning to live with all the differences that are inherent and indeed necessary for humanity's survival and for healthy and stable ecosystems" (p. 121). Thus, the eco-community concept explains the notion of biocentrism in which equal values are given to humans and nonhumans on the planet.

In his definition of himself, Whitman defines the universal Man regardless of his or her age, religion, sex, race, and social rank. He celebrates diversity which is a basic ecofeminist principle as he says that he is a man "of every hue and caste am I, of every rank and religion" (XVI, p. 76) since it is the same air breathed by all the rich and the poor, the king and servant, and the literate and the illiterate as he calls it "the common air that bathes the globe" (XVII, p. 77). In another instance, he says, "in all people I see myself, none more and not one a barleycorn less" (XX, p. 78). Such definition of Man abolishes all hierarchies and differences that are based on race, religion, gender, or class. Iman Hanafy in her article, "Cultures in Conflict: An Interpretation of Alice Walker's *Everyday Use*" gives a good example on the cultural dualities and ambivalence racism can create inside the modern American society of the twentieth century: "Alice Walker's 'Everyday Use' represents a variety of cultures" that exist in a hostile environment due to color racism (495). Achieving equality among humans themselves is the first step toward achieving equality between humans and nature.

On the other hand, Whitman celebrates the connection between humanity and nature through his presentation of natural phenomena which humans are not separate from; rather, he/she is part of the equation. Whitman regards the grass as a symbol that abolishes racism and connects the living with the dead. In his view, nature is self-regenerating, and the dead are part of nature, so "they are alive and well somewhere, / The smallest sprout [of grass] shows there is really no death" (VI, p. 67). The grass also grows everywhere "among black folks as among white" (VI, p. 66). Such statement unreservedly criticizes slavery and racism as it shows equality and hierarchy among all humans. Moreover, it values the biospheric view of the cosmos rather than excluding humans and giving them extra value over nature. Whitman describes his swimming act as an act of unification with nature and with the river as he says, "I will go to the

bank by the wood and become undisguised and / naked, I am mad for it to be in contact with me” (II. P. 63). He records his feelings as he experiences life in the lap of nature, so thrilled, and so healthy.

Mies and Shiva emphasize the idea that “life on earth can be preserved only if people again begin to perceive all life forms as sacred and respect them as such. This quality is not located in an other-worldly deity, in transcendence, but in everyday life, in our work, the things that surround us, in our immanence” (p. 18). In this sense, humans and nature are brought together in one balanced complementary ecosystem. Holyn Wilson (1997) believes in the role of nature in bringing about happiness and peace as she says, “Nature is not inferior to culture, because natural talents give rise to the skills of culture. Yet the more culture progresses, the greater the challenge to human freedom and happiness” (p. 400). This view of nature points to its ability to provide such happiness and freedom to humans away from the confines of culture.

4. Interdependence in *The Country of the Pointed Firs* and *Tom Sawyer*

This section of the article explores this intricate relationship among humans themselves (man and woman) and between humans and nature. It has been diagnosed by ecofeminism as both interconnected and interdependent. The role of nature and Mrs. Todd in *The Country of the Pointed Firs* constitutes harmony and organism that are the heart of transcendentalism and ecofeminism. *Tom Sawyer's* concern about Huck, Tom, and Enjun Joe reminds us of the transcendental and ecofeminist ethics of care about the whole community. From the other side, this section demonstrates the value of the place, home and community in fulfilling the ecofeminist and transcendental ideas of interconnectedness and interdependence. Then, through the application of the ecofeminist theory, the researchers contend that women play a tremendous role in creating a successful ecosystem and in giving an ideal example of gender relations based on love, peace, and interdependence. It has been a tradition that the patriarchal world of “culture” labels women as part of nature due to their physical and reproductive traits. This part of the article shows that men and women reciprocate interdependence. Ynestra King (1990) draws attention to the idea that the activities of women that are believed to be natural such as bringing up children, mothering, and farming are absolutely “social” (p. 116). In this sense, women represent the bridge into the world of culture, and it would be false to place them in the realm of nature. This analysis is demonstrated by our ecofeminist reading of Sarah Jewett's *The Country of the Pointed Firs* and Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*.

In *The Country of the Pointed Firs*, nature is represented as a community that is full of life, experience, and creativity. It is healing, nurturing, and connecting people to each other and people to nature as well. Mrs. Todd, a herbalist, is part of nature. She is able to make good use of the tame and wild herbs in healing physical and emotional wounds and ailments. She is an apothecary who would give instructions of usages and warnings of the medicine. In her book, *The Death of Nature*, Carolyn Merchant (1980) is much concerned about nature's sustainability with the human world that she points out, “all parts [in nature] are dependent on one another and mutually affect each other and the whole. Each portion of an ecological community, each niche, exists in a dynamic relationship with the surrounding ecosystem” (Pp. 99-100). The unnamed female narrator in the novel describes the efficiency of Mrs. Todd's work as she says, “it may not have been only the common ails of humanity with which she tried to cope; it seemed sometimes as if love and hate and jealousy and adverse winds at sea might also find their proper remedies among the curious wild-looking plants in Mrs. Todd's garden” (p. 15). Therefore, nature can heal physical as well as psychological wounds.

Nature provides the necessary equipment for humans to achieve success, creativity, and innovation. The narrator moves to the village of Dunnet Landing, a maritime village in eastern Maine as a summer lodging place in order to write a long piece of writing. In this sense, nature is inspiring. The schoolhouse that the narrator moves to is located uphill overlooking the sea. Such location will inspire the narrator to write her piece, and this shows the collaboration the place offers to humans in their worldly tasks to achieve something as hard as writing. This place also represents harmony and oneness with nature and humans.

It is true that the narrator moves into this village looking for seclusion that is appropriate for writing. However, she is visited by Captain Littlepage, a man in his eighties, who will tell her stories about his voyages in the sea. Also, her

house was open for bees that will come and go and also for the swallow that will come and go safely (p. 24), and for the “golden robin, with the most joyful and eager of voices, was singing close by in a thicket of wild roses” (p. 26). What seems to be noticeable here is that it is both man and woman who are connected to nature not only women—as patriarchy claims in order to oppress both women and nature. In her book, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (1993), Val Plumwood speaks of the negative effects of such identification as she points out, “it is not only women who have been damaged and oppressed by assimilation to the sphere of nature, but also western culture itself which has been deformed by its masculinization and denial of the sphere associated with women” (p. 30). The sea is also represented as a source of power that “made men of those who followed it” (p. 25). The sea is full of life, and it is life giving in the sense of bringing about energy and strength for those who will take it as their occupation. Littlepage criticizes those men who forsake the sea and start leading a lazy life. Moreover, the sea is represented as a channel that would facilitate getting information and knowledge of the outside world better than “a cheap, unprincipled newspaper” (p. 25). It is represented as a community. Nature, as Mrs. Todd expresses her inner state of mind to the narrator, is therapeutic. It helps release the inner conflict and the repressed desires out of the psyche, causing relief. Mrs. Todd, on the Green Island while collecting the pennyroyal, speaks of her love to her husband, Nathan, and also of her love to another man. The place, the Green Island where she is collecting the plant, reminds her of such memories, one can say, it is the memory of the place. In this sense, one cannot speak of the place as an isolated inanimate location. Rather, place could be full of memories, events, feelings, and emotions. Mrs. Todd says referring to a particular spot on the Island, “I spent some happy hours right here. I always liked Nathan, and he never knew. But this pennyroyal always reminded me, as I’d sit and gather it and hear him talkin’ - it always would remind me of- the other one” (p. 49). Plant refers to the value of one’s home as indispensable as she points out that “one of the strategies of bioregional organizing is to turn our attention toward home and community, instead of primarily focusing on the world away from home” (p. 132). Therefore, bioregionalism is, in essence, impregnated with transcendental thought that addresses ecofeminist principles of interconnectedness of humans among themselves and between humans and nonhumans.

The Bowden family reunion is a good example of human relationships that are characterized by communication, interdependence, and love. A good demonstration of such good qualities that exist in a healthy ecosystem is the warm reception Mrs. Blackett gets as she arrives at the family reunion where “an elderly man who wore the look of a prosperous sea-captain put up both arms and lifted Mrs. Blackett down from the high wagon like a child, and kissed her with hearty affection” (p. 89). Such love, respect, and warmth reflect the good values and ethics of ecofeminism. At the ceremony of reunion, the feast is set for everybody, and “the ministers and Mrs. Blackett, with a few of their rank and age, were put in places of honor” (p. 95). The narrator wonders that two members of the Bowden family are not sitting with the others in such familial atmosphere that she comments, “it was not the first time that I was full of wonder at the waste of human ability in this world, as a botanist wonders at the wastefulness of nature, the thousand seeds that die, the unused provision of every sort” (p. 95). Therefore, the communal life that gathers together humans and nature in an interconnected web is so vital and essential to ecofeminists. Plant points out that “home means much more than the nuclear family” (p. 133). It includes the whole community.

In *Tom Sawyer*, the concept of the family is so important in the sense that it preserves the balance of ecosystem through providing love, security and care to its members. Tom, Huck, and Joe Harper return from Jackson’s forest to the town of Petersburg where Tom and Joe were warmly received by their families “while poor Huck stood abashed and uncomfortable, not knowing exactly what to do or where to hide from so many unwelcoming eyes” (p. 114). Tom proves his maturity when he notices that Huck has no one to embrace him or care for him, and he tells his aunt that “it ain’t fair. Somebody’s got to be glad to see Huck” (p. 115). Without a family, Huck will go astray and will not be able to lead a normal, well-balanced life in the community. It is true that Tom’s stay on the island with the other two boys for almost a week gave them the freedom and independence they want away from the surveillance of Aunt Polly and the other’s families. Such life of complete independence and freedom embodied in the absence of authority, in swimming, in fishing and pirating is not enough to achieve the balanced healthy ecosystem. That is why Tom and the

other boys decide to return to the town. What they need is not independence but interdependence by which they achieve the balance between independence and their social communication with others. Huck is a good example of a person that should be taken care of. So far, he is a boy who doesn't really belong to a family. He has nobody but his drunkard father. In this sense, Huck belongs more to the realm of nature rather than to that of culture. Moreover, he doesn't care about the society's views of him. He doesn't go to school, and he is "cordially hated and dreaded by all the mothers of the town, because he was idle and lawless and vulgar and bad" (p. 42). So, this is the society's view of Huck that caused him to be an outcast. If left so and not taken care of, Huck might end up in the world of crime no less than Injun Joe. What he needs is a proper education that will get him rid of superstitions such as that of the dead cat that is good for curing thwarts. Such superstitions lead Huck to go to the graveyard along with Tom to witness a crime of murder. Widow Douglass was the only person who provides home and family to Huck in order to save him from degeneration. On the other side, it was Huck who saved Widow Douglas from Injun Joe's revenge of her husband who judged Joe to be whipped publicly. So, it is the widow's goodness to Huck and his love for her that saved her. This is the interdependence relationship that ecofeminists advocate.

Ecofeminism aspires to contain all members of the community in one category rather than in a binary or dualistic valorization that entails opposition, hatred, and hierarchy. The representation of the novel's villain, Injun Joe is very racist from an ecofeminist perspective. Ecofeminists consider this character as a victim of his society rather than a victimizer. Plant points out that, "The newcomer's world view was built on the notion of a hierarchy—the Great Chain of Being—that had men second only to God, with women, other peoples (i.e., dark-skinned ones), and other creatures closest to the earth and therefore to the devil" (p. 124). It is this stereotype that inferiorizes people of color such as Injun Joe. The local society of St. Petersburg considers this man a foreigner and an outsider because he is a "half-breed" (p. 64). That is, half white and half colored. What led Injun Joe to be a criminal would most likely be the maltreatment he gets from this society. Before he kills Dr. Robinson, he reminds him of an incident that influenced him so much that once he came to the house of the Robinsons' asking for food. Dismissed and jailed by the Robinsons', Injun Joe's attitude to others got changed, and he ends up in the world of crime and murder causing a schism in the well-balanced ecosystem.

5. Conclusion:

Ecofeminists' vision of humans-nature connection presupposes completion and nurturing rather than opposition and superiority of culture over nature or man over woman. This new vision can reform the patriarchal capitalist binary of patriarchy and nature. Merchant criticizes such dualism as she says, "Nature-culture dualism is a key factor in Western civilization's advance at the expense of nature ... in America the nature-culture dichotomy was basic to the tension between civilization and the frontier in westward expansion and helped to justify the continuing exploitation of nature's resources" (pp.143-44). Therefore, ecofeminism advocates the humans' interconnectedness with nature as one organism or unity in which "everything is connected to everything else ... [and] all parts are dependent on one another and mutually affect each other and the whole" (p. 99). In this way, human society could achieve an ideal of a well-balanced and healthy ecosystem in which nature and culture complete each other.

Transcendentalism as a philosophical and intellectual movement can be seen as the harbinger of ecofeminism. It has produced the ecofeminist thoughts about the ideal relations among humans themselves and between humans and nonhumans. In their literary works discussed in this article, Emerson, Whitman, and Thoreau speak to the spirit of interconnectedness of the human society with nature rather than supporting an anthropomorphic patriarchal philosophy. The selected and discussed novels of Jewett and Twain, though realist and regional, are much influenced by transcendental thought. Those two novels show how women play a huge role in striking balance and in maintaining familial relations. If there shows up a rift in such family relationships, women could fix this rift and be successful in their resistance of patriarchal oppression, achieving a holistic vision of interdependence and interrelationships rather than dependence or independence.

Identifying women with nature can be seen as a male practice and a tradition that aims to marginalize and exploit

both of them. Patriarchy has based this oppressive connection between women and nature on reproduction, nurturing, and the production activities of both women and nature. However, feminists and ecofeminists have realized the negative connotation of such connection and have worked to undermine it through dismantling patriarchal oppression and proving that it is not a dualistic connection between women and nature. Rather, such dichotomy should be replaced by a complementary relationship between humanity and nature in which males, females, and nature are connected together in a healthy well-balanced ecosystem.

REFERENCES

- Alwan, D. R. (2019) "The Predicament of Woman: A Feminist Reading in Selected Victorian Poetry." *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*. Vol. 46, 2(Suppl. 2), pp. 807-816.
- Amanda Liu, Li-Hsion. (2018) "'Where Should We Turn When We Cannot Trust Our Judicial System?': Naturalism, Race, and Justice Mark Twain's Novels." *Teaching American Literature: A Journal of Theory and Practice*. Vol. 9, 3, pp. 54-77.
- Cross, C. L. (2018) "Ecofeminism and an Ethic of Care: Developing an Eco-Jurisprudence." *Acta Academica*. Vol. 50, 1, pp. 28-40.
- Emerson, R. W. (1969) "Nature." *Selected Prose and Poetry: Ralph Waldo Emerson*. New York: Holt, pp. 181- 224.
- Gilbert S. (1985) "What Do Feminist Critics Want? A Postcard from the Volcano." *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory*. Ed. Showalter, Elaine. New York: Pantheon Books, pp. 29-45.
- Griffin, S. (1980) *Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Gruen, L. (1993) "Dismantling Oppression: An Analysis of the Connection between Women and Animals." *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*. Ed. Gaard, Greta. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 60-90.
- Hanafy I. (2010) "Cultures in Conflict: An Interpretation of Alice Walker's Everyday Use." *Dirasat: Human and Social Sciences*. Vol. 37, 2, pp. 495-503.
- Harvey, D. (1996) *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference*. Cambridge: Blackwell.
- King, Y. (1990) "Healing the Wounds: Feminism, Ecology, and Nature/ Culture Dualism." *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism*. Eds. Diamonds, Irene and Gloria Feman Orenstein. San Francisco: Sierra Club Book, pp. 106-121.
- Leenay, Kathryn. (2000) *Sarah Orne Jewett : Transcendence in Nature* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from: https://digitalcommons.brockport.edu/eng_theses/80.
- Jewett, Sarah. (1896) *The Country of the Pointed Firs and Other Stories*. New York: Double day Anchor Books, 1956.
- Meehan, Sean Ross. (2013) "Ecology and Imagination: Emerson, Thoreau, and the Nature of Metonymy." *Criticism*. Vol. 55(2), Wayne State University Press, pp. 299-330.
- Merchant, C. (1980) *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution*. San Francisco: Harper.
- Mies, M. and Shiva V. (1993) *Ecofeminism*. Halifax, N.S.: Fernwood.
- Nhanenge, J. (2011) *Ecofeminism: Towards Integrating the Concerns of Women, Poor People, and Nature into Development*. New York: University P. of America.
- Plant, J. (1997) "Learning to Live with Differences: The Challenge of Ecofeminist Community." Warren, Karen, ed. *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 120-139.
- Plumwood, V. (1993) *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature*. London: Routledge.
- Shiva, V. (1988) *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development*. London: Zed Books.
- Slicer, D. (1998) "Toward an Ecofeminist Standpoint Theory." *Ecofeminist Literary Criticism: Theory, Interpretation, Pedagogy*. Ed. Gaard, Greta and Patrick Murphy. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, pp. 49-73.
- Thoreau, Henry David. (1854) *Walden and Other Writings*. Toronto: Bantam Books, 1962.
- Trecker, Janice Law. (2011) "The Ecstatic Epistemology of Song of Myself." *The Midwest Quarterly*, Vol. 53 (1), Pittsburg State University, pp. 11-25

- Twain, Mark. (1876) *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*. Toronto: Bantam Books, 1966.
- Vance, L. (1993) "Ecofeminism and the Politics of Reality." *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature*. Ed. Gaard, Greta. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, pp. 118-145.
- Warren, K. (1997) "Taking Empirical Data Seriously: An Ecofeminist Philosophical Perspective." *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*. Ed. Warren, Karen, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 3-20.
- Whitman, W. (1948) "Song of Myself." *The Complete Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman*. New York: Pellegrini & Cudahy, pp. 27-88.
- Wilson, H. (1997) "Kant and Ecofeminism." *Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*. Ed. Warren, Karen. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, pp. 390-411.

الإنسان و الطبيعة و النظرية النسوية الإيكولوجية في أعمال مختارة من الأدب الأمريكي: (دراسة تطبيقية)

عبدالله فوز البدارنة، شادي صالح نعامنة، عبدالله بلال الشيخ حسن *

ملخص

تبحث هذه الدراسة في نظرية النسوية الإيكولوجية بوصفها نظرية بنائية تستمد جذورها المتأصلة من مدرسة الفكر المتسامي الأمريكية في القرن التاسع عشر، وعلى الرغم من ظهورها في الحركات النسوية في أواخر القرن العشرين، إلا أن النسوية الإيكولوجية- كما يقدم الباحثون- امتداد للفكر المتسامي الأمريكي، ويتضح من الأعمال الأدبية المختارة، ويسلط البحث الضوء على العلاقة بين البشر وغير البشر في مقالة رالف والدو إيمرسون الفلسفية "Nature" (1836)، وكتاب هنري ديفيد ثورو Walden (1854)، وقصيدة والت ويتمان "Song of Myself" (1855). ومن أجل إثبات أن فلسفة القرن التاسع عشر المتسامية تشكل بذور الفكر النسوي الإيكولوجي للقرن العشرين، تبرز هذه المقالة الأفكار الإيكولوجية في الروايات الأمريكية لسارة أورني جيوت بعنوان The Country of the Pointed Firs (1896)، وفي رواية مارك توين The Adventures of Tom Sawyer (1876) ذات الفكر المتسامي في هذه الروايات، وتم التركيز بشكل كبير على فعالية الأفكار و القيم الإيكولوجية في ترسيخ الترابط والاعتماد المتبادل بين جميع أفراد المجتمع للوصول لعلاقات اجتماعية سوية تكمن أهمية هذه الدراسة في إدراك أن النسوية الإيكولوجية نظرية ناجحة في تشخيص المشكلة ورأب الصدع بين الرجل والمرأة وبين الثقافة والطبيعة و لتقديم الحلول الناجعة لها.

الكلمات الدالة: النسوية الإيكولوجية، الجندرية، الذكورية الرأسمالية، الأدب الأمريكي في القرن التاسع عشر، حركة التسامي.

*الجامعة الهاشمية، الأردن. تاريخ استلام البحث 2018/9/16، وتاريخ قبوله 2019/1/8.