

OPPRESSED FEMALE PROTAGONISTS AND THEIR SURVIVAL  
STRATEGIES: AN ECOFEMINIST PERSPECTIVE IN TONI  
MORRISON'S THE BLUEST EYE AND ALICE WALKER'S THE  
COLOR PURPLE

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Almighty “Allah”

(Who has given me knowledge, opportunity, fortitude and patience)

To all “women” in my life

(My mother who suffers for me; my wife who supports me; my daughters who  
inspire me).



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PERPUSTAKAAN TUNKU TUN AMINAH

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## ABSTRACT

The current study draws on the perspective of ecofeminism's main premise, which states that the patriarchal ideology authorizes the oppression of women and many other marginalized groups, which leads to the actions of the legitimization of the destructions of nature. In both Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, one encounters a significant problem regarding the female characters' responses to and association with the natural world. Upon reaching a critical point of view in their lives, the female characters in both novels begin to display a tremendous realization of the importance of nature. Therefore, they start striving and liberating themselves via ecofeminist values and attitudes from the prescribed gender roles imposed on them. For this very reason, the aim of the study is to examine the complexity of embedding natural aspects within these texts in the light of ecofeminist theoretical framework to unravel the motives that might have motivated both the writers and their female characters to adopt ecofeminist values. The descriptive qualitative method was employed in this study using the techniques of textual analysis. The findings of the current research demonstrated that most of the black female characters have been pushed to the periphery on the account of gender, race, and class. However, only some female characters in the novel survive spiritually and physically by utilizing ecofeminist ideology and strategies. While Morrison incorporated social and political stance, Alice Walker's ecofeminist stance reflected political and, more importantly, spiritual attitudes. Both of them supported women who crave for freedom and emancipation from the shackles of discrimination and bondage. The oppression of women, children, people of colour, the poor and the environment is interwoven and therefore must be battled simultaneously. Future research should study the comparison of women's nature writing to men's nature writings, through ecofeminist perspective. Further the later works can also be a good source of ecofeminist critical research.



## ABSTRAK

Kajian semasa menggunakan premis utama bagi perspektif ekofeminisme, yang menyatakan bahawa ideologi patriarki mengizinkan penindasan terhadap wanita dan golongan terpinggir lain, yang mengakibatkan kepada tindakan pengabsahan bagi pemusnahan alam. Dalam karya *The Bluest Eye* oleh Toni Morrison, dan karya *The Color Purple* oleh Alice Walker, terdapat masalah penting mengenai bagaimana watak-watak wanita berreaksi dan berhubung dengan alam. Apabila mereka telah mencapai sudut pandang kritis dalam kehidupan, mereka mula mempamerkan kesedaran yang luar biasa mengenai kepentingan alam. Lalu, mereka berusaha dengan gigih dan membebaskan diri menerusi nilai dan sikap ekofeminis dengan meninggalkan peranan gender yang telah disogokkan ke atas mereka. Atas sebab ini, kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji kerumitan penyisipan aspek semula jadi dalam karya-karya ini berdasarkan kerangka teori ekofeminis bagi membongkar motif yang mendorong kedua-dua penulis dan watak-watak wanita yang menerapkan nilai-nilai ekofeminis. Data kajian ini dianalisis menggunakan kaedah deskriptif kualitatif iaitu teknik analisis teks. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan bahawa kebanyakan watak wanita berbangsa kulit hitam telah dipinggirkan berdasarkan jantina, bangsa, dan kasta masyarakat. Meskipun begitu, terdapat sebilangan watak wanita dalam karya-karya ini yang mampu bertahan secara rohani dan jasmani dengan mempraktikkan ideologi dan strategi Ecofeminis. Walaupun Morrison merangkumkan sikap sosial dan politik, Alice Walker pula memaparkan sikap politik dan, yang lebih penting, kerohanian. Mereka berdua memberi sokongan terhadap wanita yang berhasrat untuk mencapai kebebasan dan kemerdekaan dari belenggu diskriminasi dan perhambaan. Mereka menjelaskan impian bagi menjiwai sifat bukan manusia dan menghentikan kemusnahan alam sekitar, namun mereka berpendapat bahawa pertautan antara bangsa, jantina, seksualiti, dan sifat harus ditanggapi. Ini ialah kerana penindasan terhadap golongan wanita, kanak-kanak, masyarakat kulit berwarna, miskin dan juga alam sekitar adalah saling berkaitan, dan oleh itu, perjuangan bagi memberi keadilan yang saksama kepada mereka mesti dijalankan secara serentak. Kajian berkenaan



pembandingan cara penulisan di antara penulis wanita dan lelaki dari perspektif ecofeminism perlu dilaksanakan pada masa hadapan. Selain itu, kajian ini akan menjadi rujukan yang baik di dalam bidang ekofeminisme.



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## LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

1. Alwan, R. M., & Kadir, Z. A. (2018). Black Women and Their Struggle for Survival: A Study in Toni Morrison's and Alice Walker's Novels Through Various Perspectives: A Narrative Review. *Opción*, 34(85), pp. 2501-2518. **(SCOPUS INDEXED)**
2. Alwan, R. M., & Kadir, Z. A. (2020). Women-nature association in their simultaneous degradation: An ecofeminist study in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*. A paper accepted in ICoSTR 2020 (UTHM) **(SCOPUS INDEXED)**



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the background of study, the problem statement, research questions, research objectives, scope of study, significance of the current study, and justification for texts selection.

#### 1.1 Background of Study

The social reconstruction of gender and race hierarchy has been an essential source of predicaments to many women all over the world. Although women have active and practical roles as dynamic and influential members in constructing societies, “women” in general and “Black women” in particular, who along human history have been victims of exploitation and patriarchal societies which do not acknowledge the productive roles women are playing in different life’s fields and arenas. Women degradation is not a recent problem. Instead, it is an old case that affected many women badly. Most women through history were subject to patriarchy; females could not possess or inherit from their ancestors. Moreover, they were often considered as objects or properties themselves. Until now, women have been powerless to have any impact on the cultural, political, or religious lives of their own communities.

Moreover, Afro-Americans are doubly oppressed that most people share familiar experiences related to the sanction of hierarchy and discrimination against women. This category is forced to live as oppressed social members who tolerate White men’s patriarchy, White women’s racial discrimination and Black men sexism. Recently, scholars like Collins (2015), Baga (2010), Tanritanir & Aydemir, (2012), Emmanuel (2014), and Abbasi & Hayat (2016) paid critical attention to the struggle



and survival of these women. The topics of women tribulation and survival have widely been tackled via various approaches and theories, such as Black Feminism, African American literary criticism, Post-colonial literary criticism Psychoanalytical Feminism. These conditions were depicted by many Afro-American female authors, such as Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and Zora Neale Hurston. Their literary works mostly portrayed long-term sufferings faced by Afro-American women in American society (Padhi, 2014).

Most importantly, texts are conventional expressions of the lived experiences of the authors who tell about the social context of their production and provide us with the means to share experiences (Bauer, Biquelet, & Suerdem, 2014). Alice Walker and Toni Morrison are two among the novelists who aim to liberate women of their community and interrogate the cultural, historical, economic-political, and even ecological assumptions supported by oppression. In their works, they have prompted people to realize the rational and spiritual progress of females and raise consciousness about the conditions in which they live. They have exposed and depicted the miserable fate of black women under the burden of the threefold oppression due to race, gender, and class (Songir, 2015). Hence, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker's selected novels that are rooted in the concerns about gender inequality, oppression, resistance, human abuses, and survival are tackled in this study from an ecofeminist perspective. Morrison and Walker have attempted to explore how the dual dominant patriarchal structure of modern society exploits and destroys women and nature. Therefore, Women's oppression and the quest for have been approached via various theories such as feminism, black feminism, intersectional feminism, womanism and ecofeminism. These approaches are discussed in detail in the following part of this chapter.

### **1.1.1 Feminism**

The essential goal of Feminism is to develop societies by enhancing females' equality and liberty. It seeks directly not only to promote social change through political activities such as public demonstrations, voter registration, and girls' education but also to demand rights for rape victims and establish shelters for abused women. Accordingly, feminist literary criticism analyses the approaches of literary works and



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the rest of cultural outcomes strengthen or subvert all forms of oppression afflicted on women, namely the financial, social, spiritual and political exploitation (Tyson,2006). When the contemporary movement of feminism started, little importance was given to the effect of gender inequality on the social situation of “Black” women. Only the white women were given special privileges (Tyson, 2006). However, each woman seeks to shape her subjective desires, problems, and needs by forging her race, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, nationality, and educational background (Tyson, 2006). In the USA, the experience of “Black women” in a patriarchal society is inseparable from their racial situation (Alexander, 2004). According to Tyson (2006), African American feminists are involved, particularly in uncovering the social and political limitations internalized in White mainstream feminists' ignorance of cultural background that is different from their own. As such, Black feminists examined the strategies on how gender discrimination could be ignored apart from racial oppression. Feminism is usually overviewed through major salient stages.

#### **A) Feminism first-wave**

In the 18th and 19th centuries, feminism was concerned primarily with criticizing liberalism, which prevailed at that time. During the time, Liberalism sustained the liberty of all people to make their own choice and decision. Theoretically, no gender distinction existed on an individual's social and political rights. As people were characterized as human beings by their ability to reason rationally, individuals were subjected to the power of reasoning and rationality and did not require the paternal guidance represented by the state. However, in practice, Liberalism was aligned with men despite its claims of gender neutrality. First-wave feminism claimed that “women were regarded as irrational Creatures and they were not permitted to vote, own property once married and had little legal control over their children or their bodies” (Beasley, 2005: 18).

Accordingly, this primary thought of feminism condemned the conventional perspective of liberalism, which stripped women of its policy as the “first-wave” feminists advocated social and political rights and self-realization based on the basic principles of a mainstream categorization. They refused the liberal notion that the



categorization was primarily commanded by males. Although they upheld the socioeconomic refusal of the liberal thought, most of them supported the development of the universal liberal belief to embrace females, giving their rights and ample mature citizenship in the Liberal capitalist structure.

### **B) Feminism second-wave**

Feminism second wave, which commenced in the 1960s and offered a new type of feminism, flourished in 1970s, strongly condemned the universal standard adopted by Liberalism, and was distinctly characterized by sharing an emancipatory outlook. Beasley Chris, in his book *Gender and Sexuality*, states that the new movement advocated a compensatory reversal in which male-bias was uncovered. Second-wave feminists upheld political and social progress which stemmed from liberation of females originated by the disrespect and exploitation through years and called for the female integration and incorporation in society. Beasley (2005: 20) asserts that:

Critics of the second wave took a more critical position towards the universal thinking of Liberalism than their predecessors of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, but did not cut all connections with its philosophies. Therefore, second-wave feminists were still presenting a form of emancipatory Modernist approach.

### **C) Feminism third-wave**

The second-wave of “feminism” encompassed a liberal emancipatory stand to sustain the female situation politically and socially, whereas third-wave feminism, contended that the efforts of women in the 1960s and 1970s still adhered to the perception of the society. Third-wave feminists considered women’s potentials and responsibility for their choices, decisions, views and status. Postfeminists were also categorized as anti-feminist as they advocated women’s full responsibility and rejected women burial in a group considered as being oppressed, referring to a solid return to the individual approach of Liberalism. The theorists occupied feminists’ position because they believed in the equality of men and women, focusing on each woman rather than society order hierarchy. “Some writers in this wave, such as Katie Roiphe and Rene Denfeld, argued that women had to cease scrutinising society and start to respond to their own fate as mature, reasoning individuals” (Beasley, 2005:24).



### 1.1.2 Black feminism

Although feminism is an umbrella movement that embraces all women who have different needs, Afro-American women have realized that it cannot respond or understand coloured women's situation. Thus, through Black feminism, Black women have found themselves trapped in double confinement. They can neither expect female unity from White women nor solidarity sisterhood from "Black" males in the Black community (Collins, 2002). This problem exists as White stream feminists are inclined to marginalize Black women because of their race, while encouraging them to prioritize gender matters at the expense of their race, arguing that the Black women are subdued more by sexism than by racism. However, some Black women have realized that feminism is the "divisive force" among Black community members (Tyson, 2006). Consequently, some have denied feminism while others have sought strategies to reconcile it with the issues in the Black community, such as Alice Walker, who labels herself as a "womanist" and devotes herself to the survival and wholeness of her community, which includes both men and women (Izgarjan and Markov, 2012).

Black feminists, thus, have long noticed that Black women's simultaneous incarnation of both blackness and femaleness left them in a bifurcation between gender and race. As a result, they were forced to prioritize social identities that are integral to their social experience and self-concepts (Fogg-Davis, 2006). Mereille Hutchison (1998) in her article, "*Black and White Feminism, a Post-colonial vision*," suggests that women from different places with different cultural and historical backgrounds should necessarily have dissimilar needs, representations and sources of subjugation and domination. Meanwhile, according to Stasuilis (1990: 282), Black feminism is "growing literature that aims to convey and portray the historical circumstances of Black women and other coloured women." In her work entitled "*Ain't I Woman*", Bell

Hooks asserted the notion that coloured females were not well expressed and comprehended by the White feminists as she claims:

Initially, black feminist approached the women's movement White women had organized eager to join the struggle to end sexist oppression. We were disappointed and disillusioned when we discovered that White women in the movement had little knowledge of or concern for the problems of lower class and poor women or the particular problems of non-White women from all classes." (Hooks, 1981:188)

In addition, Patricia Hill Collins defends the rights of the African American woman says that:

African-American women have been victimized by interesting oppression. But portraying US Black women solely as passive, unfortunate recipients of abuse stifles notions that Black women can actively work to change circumstances and bring about changes in our lives. Similarly, presenting African-American women solely as heroic figures who easily engage in resisting oppression on all fronts minimizes the very real costs of oppression and can foster the perception that Black women need no help because we can ‘take it. (Collins, 2000:287)

When contemporary Black-feminist criticism started, many writers and critics began to connect between contemporary analysis and ancestor writers to establish a form of link between oppression of women of colour and literary criticism to literary works and mainstream values in the present and in the past (Griffin, 2007). Many critical and creative works were published, like the novels of Morrison, Walker, and Maya Angelou which highlight the problems that hinder African American women from achieving freedom, achieving emancipation for African American women concentrating largely on “black” men's focusing largely on Black men's domination of ‘Black women’ in an oppressive society that controls all Black people (Griffin, 2007). Toni Morrison’s novel “*The Bluest Eye*” and Alice Walker’s novel “*The Color Purple*” explore negative impact of created standards on Black children and their personality building. By writing about these “women” and reconstructing a confident image of themselves and their bodies celebrating their femininity, Black feminist authors reshape new norms and values of beauty that suit Black women.

### 1.1.3 Intersectional feminism

Intersectional feminism is another approach that tackles Black American women's tribulation and their quest for survival. This theory, introduced by Professor Kimberle Crenshaw (1989), examines the interrelation and overlapping systems of domination, oppression, degradation, and discrimination experienced by women based on not only gender but also race, sexuality, socioeconomic state, physical ability, and other marginalized trends. Black American women are conscious of the systematic bias in their daily lives, and they are likely to oppose aggression. Crenshaw (1989) argued that Black women are often ignored in the analyses because of either racism, oppression, or gender since the former throws light primarily on Black women whereas the latter on the lives of “White women”, reflecting and discussing the interaction of

race and gender without considering intersectionality. Nevertheless, she did not sufficiently examine the particular manner in which Black women were subdued and marginalized (Smith, 2011).

#### 1.1.4 Womanism

Feminism gives great importance to the rights and equality of women, rejecting and even rebelling against the deprivation of women's rights. It seeks to establish a harmonious world in which women and males are equally treated. Nevertheless, feminism is a White-oriented movement and concerns mainly with the Whites' issues. Thus, Alice Walker created the term womanism to discuss Black women's sufferings, which have not been dealt with by feminism that was not an appropriate theory as realized by Black writers. This is because White people do not suffer what Black people have gone through. For many, feminism focuses only on women, usually White women. Walker's famous expression is cited as "womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender, explains how Black women are womanist' while White women remain merely feminist". "A womanist stands for the wholeness of both male and female groups because the womanist is a Universalist" (Collins, 1991: 216). It is Alice Walker, who originated this movement due to the wide range of topics in her works which express a diversity of skills her own community.

In contrast, womanism do not separate women's sufferings from males' sufferings as they both face the same issues: race and colour discrimination. Generally speaking, feminism heavily deals with women and their issues, while womanism deals with race and general issues. Womanism does not consider masculinity as a threat; it sees that both genders are outsiders, so this movement aims to prove that Afro-American people can be insiders (Smith, 2016). Womanism is established as a substitute movement to feminism, discusses issues including colour, social class, race, or sex. It presents a social outline for women of colour and provides these women with weapons in their battle with masculinity bringing about limiting standards. Womanism is also interrelated to new approaches such as Ecofeminism and Marxist feminism under the umbrella of feminism (Izgarjan & Markov, 2012).

### 1.1.5 Ecofeminism

Most remarkably, in its more modern content, womanism combines features of ecofeminism in its commitment to unity, ecosystem, and protection of life resources. As ecofeminism premised on a hypothesis that all shapes of natural world are revered and interrelated, it rejects male-controlled institutions that have caused the oppression all the forms of life irrespective of destructive consequences. All ecofeminists realize a relationship that connects the oppressive treatment of society with both women and non-human living beings. Womanism and spiritual ecofeminism can be analogous in their emphasis on the protection of the earth, consideration for its residents (Izgarjan & Markov, 2012).

As mentioned earlier, feminist movement states the way women are considered inferior to men. Therefore, it attempts to put an end to the oppressive structures in society. It also aims to bring about equality among all people in social, economic, political, and legal realms. Emerged from feminism, Ecofeminism is a definite branch of the feminist movement which revolts against all types of degradation, namely males over females, and humans over nature. Warren (2000:1) defines ecofeminism as:

An umbrella term for a variety of different positions concerned with the connection between the unjustified domination of women, people of colour, traditional people, poor people and the unjustified domination of nature.

Ecofeminism highlights the way in which these forms of oppression “hierarchies” not merely are interconnected but also affect people and the ecosystem. Theorists contend that an inextricable analogy existed between “patriral domination” and “oppression of women” in social structures and “the destruction of the environment” by condoning to male beliefs and practices (Plumwood, 2002). Similarly, in her book “*Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature*” (2007), Karen J. Warren defines ecofeminism as “the position that there are important connections between how one treats women, people of colour, and the underclass on the one hand and how one treats the nonhuman natural environment on the other” (Warren, 2007: xi). Adding that ecofeminism is an interdisciplinary approach, she embraces the notion that women and nature must become allies to resist the “logic of domination” because both are victims of such ideology.

More importantly, Ecofeminism criticizes the governing male-controlled established outline and a female stenotype that is based on conventional environmental values. As Warren remarks that:

The dominant Patriarchal framework is one which takes traditionally male identified beliefs, values, attitudes and assumptions as... the standard, A Patriarchal conceptual framework is characterized by value hierarchical thinking... such... thinking gives rise to a logic of domination...which serves to legitimate inequality, when, in fact, prior to the metaphor of Up-Down, one would have said only that there existed diversity (Warren, 2014: 6-7).

Significantly, Ynestra King (1989) also adds that ecofeminism is thoroughly affiliated with all movements that seek to end supremacy. King names this theory as “cultural feminism” which objects both the denial of nature/women connection (rationalist feminism) and the notion of women are more natural than men (radical feminism). She remarks that “both these positions are unwittingly complicit with nature/culture duality. Women’s oppression is neither strictly historical nor strictly biological. It is both” (Sharma, 2013:135). She also claims that sex plays an essential role in defining person’s individuality and that ecosystem and feminism are knotted into an insubstantial bond. She adds that it is ecofeminism that unites “feminism and ecology” and gives females a historic status saying that: “Without an ecological perspective which asserts the interdependence of living things, feminism is disembodied” (Sharma, 2013: 135).

Moreover, Ecofeminism evolved from a history that inexorably authorizes oppression, exploitation of nature, women and structures of the world that are perceived as lowly. King also asserts that the oppression of the working class and people of colour sufferings from the hierarchal perspective of Western Man. She remarks, “It is my contention that the systemic denigration of working class people and people of colour, women and animals is connected to the basic dualism that lies at the root of Western Civilization.” (King,1989: 106-107). Eco-feminism demonstrates that an appropriate examination must also underscore the close rational and past links between the numerous forms of control.

The term “ecofeminism” weds ecological concerns with feminist problems for the demonstration of women and nature in literature. Critics of this theory explore woman-nature relationship. Ecofeminists have to investigate and analyse the inextricable affinity. Also, they can search a premise for the domination of females



and destruction of nature which stems from male-dominating institutions. (Campbell, 2009). In the same vein, Noël Sturgeon, in his book “*Ecofeminist Nature*” (2016: 102) defines Ecofeminism as “a movement that makes connections between environmentalists and feminisms”. Further, Greta Gaard comments that Ecofeminism highlights social and environmental problems as it is

more than a theory about feminism and environmentalism, or women and nature..., it approaches the problems of environmental degradation and social injustice from the [notion] that how we treat nature and how we treat each other are inseparably linked (Gaard, 2001: 157-172).

Although ecofeminism is divided into various sub-divisions, their primary aim is to set free current “epistemologies”, including women and non-human entities, from the patriarchal hierarchy superiorities that impose policies on the relationship between humanity and the natural world. Besides, it also seeks “to challenge inequalities in gender, class, and race, with an emphasis on giving voice to a “multiplicity of subject positions” (Rowland, 2015:48). Adopting these sorts of approaches, “ecofeminist writers” such as Toni Morrison and Alice Walker can go some way toward developing compelling narratives to defend women and the environment in their community. If “the arts express the emotions that guide scientific research” (Hengen, 2006: 75), then their novels “*The Bluest Eye* and *The Color Purple*” are works of influential discourses in which we can perceive the need for a philosophical review of the interactions of humankind towards “women and nature”. These texts might, therefore, be considered as an insightful and productive literary investigation in all parts the literary texts “style, form, and subtext”, which utilizes narrative techniques “setting, narration, language”, and diverse methodologies in ecological feminism creating modern styles of appreciating both women and the environment.

Since several ecofeminists had expected at the advent of the current century, this theory has been well recognized and generated a momentum of new analytical outlook nowadays (Gaard and Murphy, 1998). Accordingly, in interweaving the principles of this theory with the examination of modern literature, several theorists — such as Patrick D. Murphy, Greta Gaard, and Catriona Sandilands — have introduced an innovative, powerful, and thoughtful ecofeminist literary interpretations and theoretical frameworks.

However, recent critical efforts such as collections, namely “*International Perspectives in Feminist Ecocriticism*” by Gaard, Estok, and Oppermann and “*New*

*Directions in Ecofeminist Literary Criticism*” by Campbell, have blended contemporary theories with literary productions, initiating the appearance of an influential and diverse ecological feminist discourse. Such oeuvres manipulate the values of ecocriticism very strictly with feminist thought (Campbell, 2009), and this amalgamation gradually develops multi-layered ecofeminist goals. Attempts have, too, been made to cross the difficulties of White-American prejudice in feminism “by not only denying the second-wave feminist notion that an inborn, universal female nature is present” (Enns, 2004:154) but also recognizing the discrepancies of women’s experiences. Utilizing the multi-layered theory of ecofeminism, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker characteristically illuminate several parts of the novel to demonstrate ecofeminist problems.

By utilizing the foundational views of ecofeminism, Ecofeminist literary criticism underscores the interconnection between “the oppression of women and nature” as presented in literature. It gives a specialized theoretical tool to examine works, displaying a new overview of how such oeuvres reflect the position of females in the world and their affinity with nature (Shober, 2017). Furthermore, it gives a room to find out social and cultural traditions and limitation that may have incorporated female emancipation but undermining “nature” and subverting world-wide transformation.

More importantly, this research proposes a modern approach to study these two works by using schemes of Ecofeminist Literary Criticism. The way how the authors take nature seriously in these novels shows how ecofeminism takes leaps beyond the primary feminist cause. Accordingly, Morrison and Walker are not merely concerned with liberating women and nature. In fact, they are concerned with Afro-American women, who are treated as Others in racist, patriarchal societies. According to Karen J. Warren’s book *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What it is and Why it Matters*,” ecofeminists “claim that there are important connections between the unjustified dominations of women, people of colour, children, and the poor and the unjustified domination of nature” (Warren, 2000: 1). Ecofeminists bring other “isms” into the question of liberation “(e.g., sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, ageism, anti-Semitism)” (Warren, 2000: 4), in order to create a movement that is all-encompassing and all-inclusive of dominated groups, including Afro-American women who are mistreated and misrepresented in the American society. These ecofeminist observations provide the essential foundation on the exploitation of



“women and nature” in this study. The thesis centres on the argument that the degradation of women and the exploitation of nonhuman nature are inextricably related as projected in the selected works of this study. Further, the thesis seeks to track the above attitudes to theorize that the emancipation of females cannot be attained fully without the emancipation of nature. Adams asserts that it is necessary to recognize the twin domination of both women and nature to perceive the subjugation of both nature and women. In this regard, Ecofeminism goes beyond the feminism limitations of sexism, racism, ageism and heterosexism to embrace the atrocious domination of nature (Howell, 1997). The study also focuses on the ecofeminist emancipatory strategies adopted by women for survival. Thus, ecofeminism extends those concerns in feminism that help explore the predicament and domination of women and the environment in the selected novels.

## 1.2 Statement of the problem

Many scholars such as Afiyah & Fariha (2012); Sarulatha & Geetha (2015); Banaj (2016); Shiva (2018); Charrumathi (2013); Abbasi (2015); Boone (2017); Emmanuel (2014); Sedehi *at el.*, (2014); Talif & Sedehi (2014); Wang *at el.*, (2014) tackled the crisis of Afro-American women, who faced forms of oppression on account of “race”, “class” and “gender”. Most studies examined the image of Afro-American women in the works of Toni Morrison and Alice Walker from many perspectives, like feminism, Black woman theory, trauma theory, Psychoanalysis theory, or postcolonial theory. However, this topic has very seldom been approached from the Ecofeminist perspective. Up to now, the ecofeminist aspects in Morrison and Walker’s selected novels have been discussed only in three papers: Martin Delveaux (2001) Abhinav Ahlawat (2013); Arda Arıkan (2015). The first study is “*An ecocritical reading of flowers in Alice Walker’s The Color Purple*” by Arda Arıkan (2015) which discussed Walker’s use of flowers to provides examples of the vitality of a hopeful existence. The scholar in this article argued that Walker uses flowers to show the change experienced by the major character, Celie. The second one is “*Transcending ecofeminism: Alice Walker, spiritual ecowomanism, and environmental ethics*” by Martin Delveaux (2001) in which the scholar argued that Walker transcends the concept of Ecofeminism, bringing in questions of race and proposing a post-Christian,



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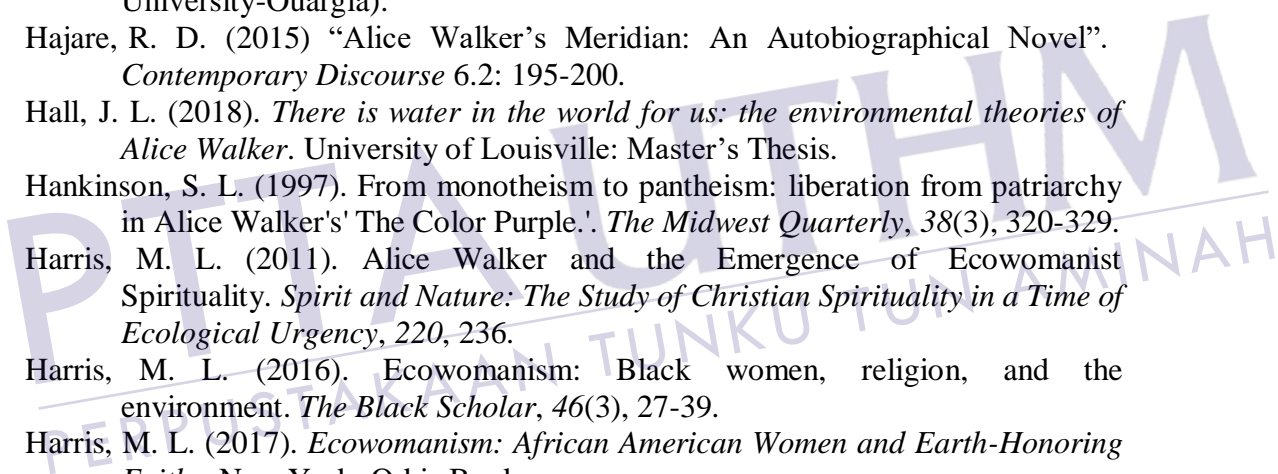
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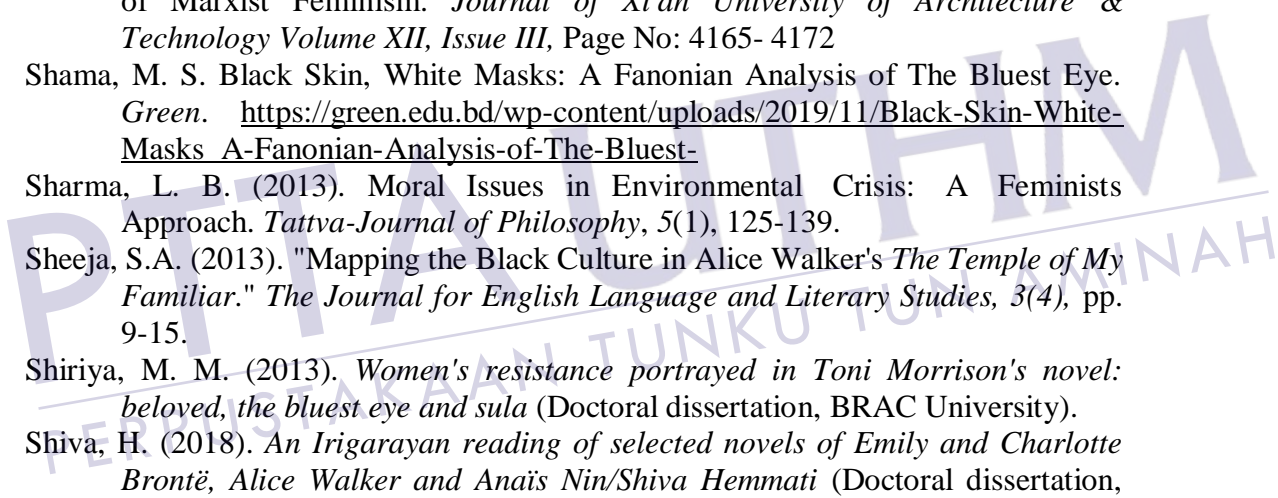
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