Eco-motherist Reading of Works of Selected African Female Writers

Olufunto Atinuke ADEBOWALE

LCU/PG/003219

Being a PhD Thesis Submitted to

The Department of Languages & Literature,

Faculty of Arts, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria

In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the Award of Doctor of Philosophy Degree (PhD) in English (Literature)

2025

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Certification Page

This is to certify that Olufunto Atinuke **ADEBOWALE** with Matriculation Number **LCU/PG/003219** carried out this research titled **'Eco-motherist Reading of Works of Selected African Female Writers'** in the Department of Languages and Literature, Faculty of Arts, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, for the award of Doctor of Philosophy Degree (PhD) in Literature and that it has not been previously submitted.

_____ _____

Dr. Ufuoma Davies **Date**
Supervisor

_____ _____

Dr. Ufuoma Davies **Date**
Head of Department

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Dedication Page

This research is dedicated to Almighty God whose love is incomparable

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Acknowledgment

My heartfelt gratitude goes to the management and staff of Lead City University for giving me a soft landing into the academic world. The university library is also appreciated for the support of the staff and availability of up-to-date materials for consultation.

I am very grateful for the love, care, and tutelage of my supervisor, Dr. Ufoma Davies who doubles as the Head of Department, Languages and Literature. She always found time to attend to me, despite her busy schedule, to painstakingly read through my work and gave me necessary guidance and assistance which made the academic journey a great one.

Also, my profound gratitude goes to Professor Anjola Robbin, Dean, Faculty of Arts. She is a person with great acumen. She was the first Lecturer that I had an encounter with, who welcomed me with open arms. Dr E.O Senayon, the Postgraduate Coordinator, Department of Languages and Literature is appreciated for her constant support. She was never bored with my endless questions. I sincerely appreciate, Dr. O. P. Olayinka, Monsieur Julius, Dr O.B Jolaoso, Dr Kemi Adesina, Dr M.O Gbadegesin, Dr R. Aluko, Dr E.Uzorji, Prof. Otunla, Mr. O.O Jegede, Mr. O.O Akande, Prof. Adetayo and my colleagues in the Department of Languages and Literature for their contributions towards the success of this work, especially Mr Babalola Oluteye Ojomo and Mrs Tolulope Raji. I can't forget the constant timely assistance of Dr Adegbola Moses, whose words of encouragement reinforces positivity in me. It is greatly appreciated. God will continuously bless you and meet you at the point of your needs.

I mustn't forget Dr Sophia Vivian Adeyeye, my good sister who preached the gospel of Lead City to my brother, Oluwaseyifunmi Ogunyinka. Their encouragement is a catalyst to this giant and great step which was in the right direction and helped tailored my ambition. God bless you duo.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

I sincerely appreciate my father, EniyangbagbesugbọnOluwarantimi Ogunyinka posthumously, for guiding my literary thoughts and for being my first English Language teacher. His passion for me remains the compass that I am still using for navigation in the academic sphere. My ever loving and caring mother, Felicia Bolanle Ogunyinka, for her constant support through prayers, words of encouragements, which can't be forgotten, is deeply appreciated.

My siblings have been of great support to me since the commencement of this programme: Mr Oluwafeyikunmi John Ogunyinka (Brother mi), for his care, concern, admonition, constant gift of data and prayers - the visionary of my dream course.(God will water you back in multiple folds in Jesus name), Honourable Oluwaseyifunmi Joshua Ayorinde Ogunyinka(O.J.A.) - my God sent angel, the midwife that assisted in birthing my agelong dream, taking on the sponsorship of this programme and putting smiles on my face, turning my depression into joy. (God will replenish your pockets in multiple folds in Jesus' name). My younger sister Oluwabusolami, your family's support is greatly appreciated. God will bless you all richly in Jesus' name and I pray the extended family tie remains ever strong, a-m-e-n!

I can't forget my loving friend and her family, Mr and Mrs Akinyomide with their children, Ayomide and Rachael, your 'gifts' were always timely. May God continues to let the chain of interest linger long and may He meets you at the point of your needs in Jesus name. Mr Musiliu Kehinde Rabiu, thanks so much for being there for me with your words of encouragement and financial support; God bless you. The Lawals, thanks so much for making your generator available always and your room, my printing shop; may God bless you abundantly. Also, Mr Olugbenga Olusegun Olayinka, thanks so much for your assistance, it wasn't taken for granted, God rewards you greatly in Jesus name.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

My appreciation goes to my husband, Dr. Babasola Agboola Adebowale, whose selfless sacrifice cushions the success of this programme. I am indebted to God's handmaid and soldiers of the Lord; Boluwatife Eniola, IfeOluwa Ayoola, Oluwaferanmi Abimbola, Oluwalofemi Agboola and Oluwayanmife Oluwadarasimi Anjola. They have been very supportive and caring.

My grand appreciation goes to Almighty God, whose inspiration is incomparable. He was always there for me.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Abstract

This study explores eco-motherism as an emerging philosophical and literary discourse within African feminist writing on the interconnectedness of women and nature for sustainability. This will be done through qualitative analysis of the selected texts aided by close reading and critical analysis of the thematic preoccupations with regards to environmental consciousness to motherhood, nurturing, and gendered resistance. The study adopts Ecofeminist Theory, Eco-motherist theory and Maternal Theory as its theoretical framework. The study will analyze the intersections of Female African Writers on female identity, ecological degradation, and the ethics of care. Five African works will be conveniently selected from five different sub regions of Africa; *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, Namibia, by Neshani Andreas, *Yellow Yellow,* Niger-Delta area in Nigeria, by Kaine Agary, *Nervous Condition,* Zimbabwe, by Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Female Fear Factory,* South Africa by Pulma Dineo Qqola, and *Woman at Point Zero,* Egypt by Nawaal Elshadawi. These books demonstrate that African women's literature not only challenges patriarchal and colonial forms of oppression but also redefines motherhood as a space of ecological and social transformation. The study concludes that eco-motherism provides a contextual framework for understanding how women's roles as nurturers extend beyond the domestic sphere to the preservation of the environment and communal wellbeing which calls for an integrative approach that will link together gender studies, literary critics, environment justice and development studies.

Keywords: Eco-motherism, Ecofeminism, African Feminism, Maternal Ecology, Environmental Literature.

Word count: 225

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Table of Contents

Title Page	i
Certification Page	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Abstract	vii
Table of contents	viii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1. Background to the study	1
1.2. Justification for the study	21
1.3. Statement of the Problem	21
1.4. Aim and Objectives of the study	22
1.5. Research Questions	22
1.6. Significance of the Study	22
1.7. Scope of the Study	24
1.8. Limitation to the Study	24
1.9. Operational Definition of Terms	24
End Notes	26
Chapter Two: Literature Review	29
2.1. Conceptual Studies	29

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

2.1.1. Historical Background of Eco-motherism 30

2.1.1.1. Ecocriticism 33

2.1.2. Ecofeminism 34

2.1.2.1. Maternal Theory 42

2.1.2.2. Afro-centric Discourse 45

2.2. Synthesis of Eco-motherist Perspectives 47

2.2.3 Interconnectedness of Women and Nature 48

2.2.4. Women and Nature: Contributions to Environmental Sustainability in Africa 50

2.2.5. African Female Writers 53

2.2.5.1. Reflection of Eco-motherism in the Selected Texts 58

2.2.6. Background of Authors 59

2.2.6.1. Background Ideologies of the Writers 60

2.2.6.2. Biography of the Writers 61

2.2.7. African Environmental History in Relation to Women and Nature Sustainability: A review of the Selected Texts 70

2.2.7.1. Historical Background of Women in Relation to Nature and Sustainability in Nigeria 70

2.2.7.2. Historical Background of Women in Relation to Nature and Sustainability in Egypt 71

2.2.7.3. Historical Background of Women in Relation to Nature and Sustainability in

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Zimbabwe. 73

2.2.7.4. Historical Background of Women in Relation to Nature and Sustainability in Namibia 74

2.2.7.5. Historical Background of Women in Relation to Nature and Sustainability in South Africa 76

2.2.8. Synopsis of the Texts 78

Yellow Yellow by Kaine Agary 78

Woman at Point Zero by Nawal Elshadawi 81

Nervous Conditions by Tsitsi Dangarembga 83

The Purple Violet of Oshaantu 85

Female Fear Factory 88

2.2.9. Overview on Characters and Characterizations 89

Yellow Yellow by Kaine Agary 89

Nervous Conditions by Tsitsi Dangarembga 94

Woman at Point Zero by Nawal Elshadawi 97

The Purple Violet of Oshaantu 104

Female Fear Factory . 110

2.3. Review of Empirical Studies 115

2.3.1. Impact of Environment Policies on Women. 118

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

2.3.2. Positivism of Eco-motherism on Women and Nature in the Society 125

Summary of Gaps in Literature 129

2.4.1. Gaps in Women and Nature Sustainability 132

End notes 134

Chapter Three: Research Methodology 139

3.1. Research Design 139

3.2. Population of the Study 139

3.3. Sample and Sampling Technique 139

3.4. Method of Data Collection 140

3.5. Method of Data Analysis 140

Chapter 4: Results and Discussion of Findings 141

4.0. Data Presentation: 142

4.1.0. Analysis of Research Questions 149

Research Question One: How do the selected novels present the maternal bond between women and nature 143

4.1.1. Women and nature as cyclical and mutually Sustaining in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas, *Yellow Yellow* by Kaine Agary and *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga. 143

4.1.1.2. Symbiotic Relationship between Women and the Land 151

4.1.1.3. Environmental Consciousness and Ecological Identity in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu, Yellow Yellow* and *Nervous Condition* 157

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

4.1.1.4. Nature as a Space for Healing and Renewal in *Woman at Point Zero, The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and *Nervous Conditions* 164

4.1.1.5. Interconnectedness of Land, Culture and Gender Roles in African Women's Literature and Feminist Roles in The *Purple Violet* of *Oshaantu*, Yellow Yellow and Female Fear Factory 170

4.1.1.6. Nature and Female Resilience in the Face of Displacement or Crisis; *Woman at Point Zero, Yellow Yellow* and *Nervous Conditions* 175

4.1.1.7. Nature as a Symbol of Female Vitality and Resistance 180

4.1.1.8. Connection to the Earth and the Body 185

4.1.1.9. Fertility and Female Physiology 186

4.1.2.0. Reclaiming Identity Through Nature in *Nervous Conditions, The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and *Woman at Point Zero* 186

4.1.2.1. Sisterhood among Women as Resistance 190

4.2 Research Question Two: What Eco-motherism Themes, Motifs, Imagery of Birth, Fertility and Renewal, symbolize ecological rebirth and social transformation in the selected novels 193

4.2.1. Eco-motherist Themes 193

4.2.2. Eco-Motherist Motifs. 206

4.2.3. Eco-Motherist Perspectives 207

4.3. Research Question Three What are the beneficial effects of the

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

symbiotic relationships of women and

nature on human sustainability in each of the selected novel 243

Discussion of Findings

End Notes 251

Chapter Five: Conclusion 255

5.1. Summary of findings 255

5.2. Conclusion 255

5.3. Recommendation 256

5.4 Contribution to knowledge 256

5.5 Suggested areas of futher studies 256

Bibliography 257

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1. Background to the Study

Africa is a society that is deeply rooted in culture. This culture celebrates supremacy of men over women. So, culture is the vehicle which the patriarchy rides in the society and patriarchal hegemony causes oppression, subjugation and discrimination of women and nature. Inspite of this fact, there is a great and intrinsic bond between them. Since women, biologically, procreate and nurture likewise nature symbolises fruitfullness. Both of them sustain the existence of human being on the earth. Women, biologically, are feminine in nature and have that nuturing characteristics which oppourtuned them to have greater affinity for nature. It is from nature that most rural women get their means of sustenance and this culminate into a great bond between them. There is close relationship between women and nature, because of the critical roles they play in natural resource management, environmental conservation, and sustainable development. This explains deep connection between women and natural world that is rooted primarily in the ability to bring forth life. Women are often more closely tied to nature through their roles in agriculture, caregiving, and community sustenance. The critical roles they play in natural resource management, environmental conservation, and sustainable development cannot be underrated. Women globally are disproportionately involved in subsistence agriculture and resource management, especially in African contexts, where their contribution is of great magnitude to food security and environmental stewardship. Studies show that 60–80% of food produce in developing countries is by women who rely on natural resources for livelihoods[1, 2.]

This makes them critical stakeholders in agricultural development and natural resource management[1]. Women collect 80% of the water used in rural households, and this makes them important stakeholders in water management[3] and it leads to improved water quality and its availability. With women-led water management initiatives in Africa, there is great achievement of higher levels of success than men-led initiatives[3]. Women's participation in forest management

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

lead to more sustainable forest use because women's groups in Africa and Asia achieved higher levels of forest conservation than men's groups[4]. They spend 2-3 times more in collecting firewood and water than men which explains their intimate relationship with the natural environment[5].

Their knowledge culturally and traditionally as African women often helped in understanding local ecosystems, biodiversity, and sustainable practices. This link between cultural roles and nature aligns with ecofeminist themes that emphasize women's unique perspectives on environmental sustainability. Statistical evidence reveals that most especially in rural Africa, women are more vulnerable to the effects of climate change, such as droughts, water scarcity, and deforestation, due to their cultural roles in resource provision with 70% of the world's poor being women, who rely heavily on natural resources for their survival[6].

Furthermore, the study underscores the importance of indigenous knowledge, communal values, and feminist solidarity in addressing ecological crises. Women depend on nature for the provision of food, which they get from the cultivation of land, and fishes from the river and free air, charcoal and firewood for fuel, clean water from the stream, medicinal herbs, for curative uses, and also generating good income. The closest person to nature are the women of which makes them to love, care and cater for it as good managers of the environment or eco-system. They try to preserve the eco-system because their survival is tied to it, especially, the rural women whose source of livelihood is derived mainly from forest, that is they depend on the forest for, water, food, fuel, fruit, condiment, medicinal herbs, and others[7]. The perspective in which the women view the environment is quite different from men's. From the Women's perspective, the environment is an important resource for survival. Therefore, the women see the need to preserve and regenerate it for sustainability of life.

At least, eighty percent of women from the third world depend on land for their survival, because of these benefits. Women have great passion and love to nurture the nature as they would, to their own being[8]. They have close relationship with nature because of certain roles and same

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

characteristics of nurturing that they both have in common. The activities of men over nature also create closer bond between them. Both found themselves under the domination and politics of men. Africa, being a male centered society, encourages patriarchy, which makes the women to be subjected under the male domination. Men symbolically represent culture. African culture always emphasizes superiority of humans over nature and male over female. Thereby bringing closeness between female and nature. Patriarchy is a system of belief and values that is deeply rooted in political, social and economic system that creates gender inequality between men and women. Culture is the vehicle upon which patriarchy rides in the society. Culture evolves from nature. People perceives culture as the opposite of nature[9]. Culture is an integral part of nature and the sole vehicle, which helps to transfigure nature [9]. Without nature, nothing can be said of the world.

Nature had been in existence even before the prehistoric time, before the evolution of culture[10]. The binary concept of culture/nature is created by man. The discovery of nature's utility for agricultural purposes right from the prehistory period, made man to become wealthy and gained dominance which caused male hegemony in the male centered society. Male hegemony causes social hierarchies and inequalities in male-centered culture. It gives superiority to men over all other beings and it is always between the oppressor and the oppressed. Therefore, this led to indirect situation of making the women to feel inferior and being subordinated by the male. Hierarchical structure is the foundation on which the association between patriarchy and capitalism is built. It promotes and justifies the superiority of the masculine and the oppression of the feminine and thus, of nature.The dominant patriarchal perspective led to the devaluation and derecognition of nature and women, which has led to the parallel exploitation of both. Nature is seen as a 'resource' to be exploited. Thus, a relationship between development and environment is built on the idea of a 'mastering of nature' by the patriarchal, which doesn't, only enables the exploitation

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

of nature, but also, allows the marginalization, devaluation, displacement and dispensability of women .

Historically, most cultures see women as an embodiment of the feminine principle and a nurturer of life. Although, patriarchal society and ideology has rendered them invisible and marginalized. Taking a look at India, standing at a vantage position of Shiva[11], in an Indian community, one can see the position of women as preservers of culture and nature. Shiva examined the relationship between the world of women, environment and the cosmological world. She argues that the connection between women and nature is an ideological one and deeply rooted in the belief systems, ideas, values and their cultural representation. The scriptures and other cultural works recognized the interplay between the ideas of creation and destruction and the dynamic energy or Shakti. The manifestation of this energy is called "Prakriti", the feminine and creative principle which is both animate and inanimate. This exists in conjunction with the masculine principle or Purusha , together, they create the world. She describes the nature as the 'creative expression of the feminine principle'. This embodiment and manifestation of the feminine principle is characterized by (i) creativity, productivity (ii). Diversity in form and aspect (iii) connectedness and inter relationship of all beings, including man (iv) continuity between the human and natural (v) sanctity of life in nature.

Since both procreate, they ensure the continuity of life on earth. Like women, nature gives birth and nurtures all that is within her care. Therefore, when the earth is viewed from feminine perspective, it means acknowledging that it has value based on what it can produce rather than what it is. That is the reason why nature is personified. The personification of nature is as a result of her ability to give life and nurtures, hence taking on the role of a female. Women have important roles assigned to them by the society as household keeper, nurturer, assistant, daughter, wife,

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

mother, sister, mother/ daughter in-law, and co-wife. They play these roles from one facet of life to another, or sometimes playing two or more of these roles simultaneously. Women‘s position is seen as essentially being closer to nature because they always entailed a close relationship with nature as reciprocity, symbiosis and harmony. They are intertwined because of the feminine role and features, they both share together.

The partnership between women and nature ensures sustainability, thus, there is an intrinsic bond between women and nature. The bond between women and nature is a profound and ancient connection that has been explored in various contexts, including history, culture, and mythology. In the sphere of African literature, this relationship has been particularly pronounced, with many female writers drawing on ecofeminist perspectives to explore the intersections between women, nature, and sustainability.

In terms of historical connections, women in many African cultures have been closely tied to the natural world, playing key roles in agriculture, food production, and environmental management [1]. For example, in some traditional African societies, women were responsible for planting and harvesting crops, and were often seen as custodians of the land and its resources. Also, culturally, the bond between women and nature has been reflected in various myths, legends, and folktales. In many African cultures, women are associated with fertility and the cycles of nature, and are often depicted as having a deep understanding of the natural world[6]. For instance, in Yoruba mythology, the goddess Oya is associated with the wind, storms, and fertility, and is often depicted as a powerful and nurturing figure. In African mythology, women are often represented as having a deep connection to the natural world. For example, in some myths, women are depicted as having the power to communicate with animals, control the elements, and heal the land[7]. These

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

mythological representations reflect the cultural significance of women's relationships with nature and highlight the importance of ecofeminist perspectives in understanding these connections.

In African literature, the bond between women and nature has been explored in various works, including those by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Ama Ata Aidoo, and Buchi Emecheta. These writers often draw on ecofeminist perspectives to explore the intersections between women, nature, and sustainability, highlighting the ways in which women's relationships with the natural world are shaped by cultural, historical, and mythological contexts. Therefore, the bond between women and nature is a complex and multifaceted connection that has been explored in various contexts. By examining these connections through an eco-motherist lens, we can gain a deeper understanding of the ways in which women's relationships with the natural world are shaped. This close relationship between women and nature cannot be over emphasized. The two are so interwoven in their relationship in the society that both are dependent on the other for instance, women are regarded for their fertility; new life were being created and reproduced as nature does. Culturally, women are naturalizes as mothers, wives, procreator and nurturer of life. Nature is also seen as feminine, therefore, it is regarded as mother nature or mother earth, because it provides food for living beings. It has infinite resources. This is to show that both are seen as reproductive, caregiver, provider, generous and compassionate (attributing similar characteristics to women and nature naturalizes women while feminizing nature). They both share the feature of passivity and dependency, which are attributes of feminine features. Nature is represented as an object of desire because it gains a feminine identity through statements[12]. Also, women are passive in nature due to their subordination likewise the environment, which is also passive in its role due to its motionless and dependent state. It is external factors like culture that modify and exploit nature. The bond between women and nature was caused by their passivity in the male dominance society.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Both nature and women share a natural bond because of the feminine features that they possess, that is, the fertility of women and the fruitfulness of nature. This explains the deep connection between women and natural world that is rooted primarily in the ability to bring forth life. For example in India, it is generally believed that the Creator gives the ability of giving life from Mother Earth to women[3]. The land is therefore referred to as a Shkagamik-Kwe, (Mother Earth), because of her female entity and provider of all things necessary to sustain life[13]. Therefore, women are closer to nature than men and this makes them perfect managers of the eco-system. Women takes care of the ecosystem because, they get their means of sustenance from it hence, the need to preserve and regenerate it for sustainability of life[14]. Taking a clue from India, rural women gather dead woods in the forest for fuel instead of cutting down live trees. This portrays their preservative instinct which is common in many rural and urban communities in Africa[15]. The dependence of women on nature for their survival is very common among Third World women[16].

In traditional African societies, the sustenance of humanity is based on plants and animals. Hence, nature plays an important role in the lives of humans. It helps man's growth at all existential levels and generally constitute the basis upon which his enjoyment of basic human rights is built. The environment is the pivotal point on which the global writing revolves. It presents man, the air space, land and water, as a world or system with unified elements that are interdependent. The environment gives physical sustenance and affords man the opportunity for intellectual, spiritual and social growth, wellbeing and enjoyment of basic human rights[17]. Consequently, man and nature depend on each other for ecological balance and optimum survival[18]. On religious matters, mankind also held aspects of nature sacred; the forests for instance were assigned as the home of ancestors, the rivers and streams, a coven for men"s potency and women's fertility. In the wake of technological advancement, land, rivers, forests and air, which serve as sources of women's needs are degraded and the effects are greatly felt by women[19]. They suffer unemployment, poverty, diseases as well as gynaecological problems and their duty as daily manager of natural

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

resources, caretakers of environment and decision-maker of domestic consumption and production patterns, become harder through environmental degradation, especially with the increase in climate change[20]. This posses great problem for some women who are the ones catering for the feeding of their homes and so, threatening their roles and responsibilities as a mother and a care giver. Not that alone, the issue of patriarchy, subsumed both women and nature under oppression, subordination and subjugation.

Patriarchal dominance is the root of various forms of gender oppression. The chief exponent of the patriarchal theory is Sir Henry Maine. The idea was earlier proposed by Friedrich Engels, in an unfinished essay in 1876. Patriarchy originated from two Latin words 'pater' (father) and arch (rule). Patriarchal structure is pivoted on men's hegemony on properties, especially land and women. Patriarchy is a system that upholds the dignity of the man over the woman , as a result of this, male is regarded as the head above the female. This lays an emphasis on gender relation i.e, superior/inferior, weak/strong social dichotomy which privileged men over women. Patriarchy is the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and extension of male dominance over women in the society in general[21]. In patriarchal culture, women are not seen as being inherently valuable, but have value based on their abilities as females. Their worth is directly related to their ability to produce new life. African culture places women's natural duty as procreation, passivity and domestic duties, under male hegemony, while nature also stands out with her productivity and generousity to human. These made women and nature to be objectified and exploited in the masculine dominated society.

Women are defined as traditional women, whose place in the society is at home, as domesticity and motherhood, which are considered to be emotional fulfillment for them. Any woman who went out of this domestic sphere was the other.[22] The society believed no true woman could be a public persuader. Women are embedded in nature and the exploitation of nature could be seen as an exploitation of women. Development and other patriarchal forces dominate and exploit women and nature. Women and nature are powerful. Although, the partiarchial world underestimates that

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

though, they may be victims of patriarchy and exploitation, women can also be agents of change. Women are more affected by ecological disasters than men and that is why they are always at the forefront of protest against the destruction of nature. In the Western understanding, the relation between women and environment is viewed as primarily material, while in the non-western countries, this relationship is considered as ideological and real and women and nature are seen to represent the feminine principle. They are both victims and agents of change in the struggle for environmental and social justice. Hence, this study underpins the notion that women and nature are intertwined, they have symbiotic relationship. The study is viewed from the lens of Eco-motherism. Therefore, eco-motherism and ecofeminism theory will be used to analyze the selected literary texts because eco-motherism is an offshoot of ecofeminism.

Eco-motherism, is an emerging strand of ecofeminist thought rooted in African socio-cultural realities. It examines the interconnected struggles of women and nature against the forces of patriarchy, colonialism, and environmental degradation. It embodies the African woman's nurturing relationship with the environment while exposing how systemic oppression marginalizes both the female body and the ecological landscape.

Eco-motherism is an African-centered theoretical framework that emerges at the intersection of ecofeminism, motherism, and African environmental consciousness. It emphasizes the intrinsic bond between women and nature, situating this relationship within the socio-cultural, economic, and political realities of the African context. While ecofeminism broadly explores how patriarchal and capitalist structures oppress both women and the environment, eco-motherism localizes this discussion by drawing upon African indigenous philosophies of motherhood, communal harmony, and environmental stewardship. It positions African women not merely as victims of ecological exploitation but as active agents and custodians of environmental preservation, embodying nurturing, resilience, and regenerative powers that mirror the fertility and sustenance of the earth.

The origin of eco-motherism can be traced to Catherine Acholonu's (1995) theory of Motherism: The Afrocentric Alternative to Feminism, which celebrates motherhood, nature, and spirituality as

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

central elements of African womanhood. Acholonu's philosophy refutes Western feminist binaries of man versus woman and nature versus culture, instead advancing a holistic approach that promotes balance, complementarity, and coexistence. Eco-motherism extends Acholonu's ideas into the ecological realm, recognizing that African women's maternal roles—cultivating land, sourcing water, and sustaining families—are inextricably linked to the well-being of the environment. Thus, any assault on the environment becomes an assault on women.

Through the lens of eco-motherism, African female writers such as Kaine Agary, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Nawal El Saadawi, Neshani Andreas, and Pumla Dineo Gqola offer profound critiques of gendered and ecological injustices in their works *Yellow Yellow*, *Nervous Conditions, Woman at Point Zero, The Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* and *Female Fear Factory* respectively. Each of these writers redefines the woman–nature nexus, portraying female protagonists whose struggles for identity, autonomy, and dignity parallel the exploitation and degradation of their environments. Agary's *Yellow Yellow* situates environmental pollution in the Niger Delta as symbolic of female violation; Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* exposes colonial and patriarchal disruptions of both land and womanhood; El Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero reveals the reclamation of the self through defiance against oppressive social structures; Andreas's The Purple Violet of Oshaantu highlights communal resilience and rural women's organic bond with the land; while Gqola's Female Fear Factory challenges the ideological mechanisms that commodify both women's bodies and nature. Collectively, these texts articulate an eco-motherist consciousness that calls for ecological balance, gender justice, and the reclamation of African womanhood as a restorative force within both social and environmental contexts.

Moreover, Eco-motherism can't be totally understood without tracing it back to Ecofeminism. Ecofeminism, is a study that connects the exploitation of women and the degradation of the environment, to the patriarchal society. It provides a critical framework to examine how African women authors represent the relationship between women, nature, and societal power structures in a patriarchal systems that oppress women and exploit natural resources in African societies. By

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

connecting ecofeminism with African literature, this analysis contributes to the discourse on global sustainability, gender equity, and environmental justice.

Ecofeminism is a theory in literature studies that have its origin in the west, that is, European America[23]. Ecofeminism was first used by Francoise in her book titled Le: Feminisme ou la Mort[24]. She called upon women to lead an ecological revolution to save the planet. Behind this call lay the consciousness of the deplorable and degradable state of the natural environment seen as feminine which correlate with the dominated conditions of women in patriarchal states[25].

Ecofeminism is a social movement that emerged from both political activism, and intellectual critique. It brings together feminism and environmentalism. In line with ecofeminism tenets, Lee Quinby sees the strength of ecofeminism as a theory that combats ecological destruction and patriarchal domination without succumbing to the totalizing impulses of masculinist politics. This is in tandem with this study, it sees a strong intertwined relationship between women and nature. Ecofeminism deals with comprehending the interconnected relationship between the subjugation of women and exploitation of the environment. Women have special connection to the environment through their daily interaction with it, especially, women in subsistent economies, producing and reproducing wealth in partnership.

Ecofeminism emphasizes that the main cause of the problem is the masculine attitudes and mind sets that have been inbuilt in the mind and our institutions for generations. This masculine notion is being displayed in our social relationships based on power dynamics in the world stage, and in our everyday lives. This perception of masculine behaviour is not human being central that is responsible for the illogical conception and actions displayed[26]. Over time, this patriarchal, cultural and traditional exaltation of the masculine, over all that is termed as feminine, has proved to be of negative consequences in the world today with the incidences of war, nuclear weapons and the ecological problems raging worldwide. Therefore, when critics use this theory in the analysis of a literary work, these links are examined in order to foster equitable societies[27-29]. This has led to

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

their emancipation and have placed the woman on the aspirations to escape the role written for her by society.

Furthermore, ecofeminism examines the connections between the oppression of the women and the exploitation of the natural environment. It posits that all forms of oppression are connected. As women and children are subjected and dominated, that is how the members of the natural environment are dominated and exploited. Thus the oppression of woman and the environment, also referred to as the natural world by patriarchal structures. Ecofeminism cannot be discussed in isolation without the other, because they are both dominated and oppressed by established patriarchal structures.

Ecofeminism sees the domination of women as stemming from the same ideologies that bring about the domination of the environment. It believes that it is about a sense of being in relationship with the natural environment[30]. Some Ecofeminist that appraises the philosophies that link feminism to the environment are: Rosemary Radford Ruether, Ivone Gebara, Vandana Shiva, Susan Griffin, Alice Walker, Sun Ai Lee-Park, Paula Gunn Allen, Monica Sjöö, Greta Gaard, Karen Warren[31]. It argues that the domination of women and the degradation of the environment are as the results of patriarchy and capitalism, i.e capitalist patriarchal (it explains the way societal values and ethics are controlled by society) which is profit-driven, sexist and male-centered. It highlights how the oppressive system work hand in hand to facilitate the exploitation of women and nature. Human beings, out of their inquisition for power and control and for the acquisition of material things, tend to forget the foundation of their existence which is located in a healthy ecosystem.

Ecosystem is a web that comprises human and non-human members that live and interact interdependently.The non-human world appears to be more important than the human, since it provides the material support base for the latter[32]. It is a global phenomenon.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Therefore, the major argument of Ecofeminism is that, when we destroy nature, we destroy women. When we violate nature, we violate women. The role of women in creating and conserving life is lost. In an ecologically alienated world, which is blind to the role of women and their harmony with the ecosystem. Ecofeminism aims at pulling down the great wall separating males from non male in the society. Without the assistance of women in domestic sphere in the society, men cannot be economically productive. Women are always there as the back bone of the male. Most of the resources being utilized by the men are gotten from nature.

The oppressor is the male, while the oppressed are non male beings which ranged from women, people of colour, poor people, people with disabilities, animals and children. So, invariably, they are both oppressed by the male simultaneously in the society. The Ecofeminist, therefore, sees the interrelationship and the prevalence of male hegemony, sees the need, are of the opinion then that, if an exocentric point of view can be created, it will definitely destroy the beliefs that are against the living and non living things. It is not possible for women to exist without men in male dominant system, because, without men, women cannot exist for reproduction, therefore, the women cannot be independent and they become men's domestic servant. It is noticed by a scholar that, women are isolated, sedentary, caring for children, cooking food and since women give birth, they are supposed to be at home and do the cooking and cleaning[33, 34]. Ecofeminism expresses a double political intervention of environmentalism into feminism and Feminism into environmentalism. It perceives the environment perceptions and values through gendered lenses and is shaped by gender roles assumptions. Women's closeness to nature, make them to be move caring and naturing towards their environment.

The issue of women and nature is widely discussed, not in Nigeria alone, but in various geographies around the world. We have writers like Susan Griffin, Val Plumawood, Carol J. Adams and Anne Karpf. Coming down to Africa, we have ecofeminism writers like Pulma Dineo Qqola's, in her literary work, *Female Fear Factory*, Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Condition,* and in Nigeria, Zaynab Alkali's *The Still Born*, Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*, *Mariama Ba's*

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

So Long A Letter. Although there have been studies on women and nature under the patriarchial hegemony, but this study is based on the beneficiary relationships that exists between them and thus, the selected texts are based on environmental history and beneficiary effect on women in the society. These African female writers not only create their own stories, but by the act of writing, they gained authority over their lives[35].

The stories, forming the ideologies of African Feminism are not entirely the same even within Africa, as many women face different social realities depending on the sub-region on the continent. Therefore an extensive comparative study will be done, to know how the women and the environment are interdependent on each other for existence. Also, the aim is to analyse and interprete the textual and conceptual essence of ecofeminism in the selected books and analyse the impact on psychological, economical and social effects on women and the environment for sustenance on human lives[11].

Moreover, Ecofeminism is an ideology and movement that takes the issues of climate change, gender equality, and social injustice as intertwined problem, all linked to masculine dominance in society[26]. It is of the opinion that, global prioritization of qualities is viewed from the masculine angle, (particularly the ones some would regard as toxic, like aggression and domination) and those in power who embody those attributes. It calls attention to the fact that women are disproportionately affected by environmental issues[27]. The concept of Ecofeminism, unveils the exploitation and invasion over the ecology and its resources by the developed countries under the disguise of globalization, urbanization and development. It argues that the domination of women and the degredation of the environment are consequences of patriarchal and capitalism, i.e capitalist patriarchal (it exemplifies the way societal values and ethics are controlled by society) which is profit-driven, sexist and male-centered. It is as if Western society has deliberately set out to destroy the integrity of the ecosystem. The knowledge that man has been given dominion over the earth according to the holy Bible has been misconstrued thereby resulting in the inconsiderate

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

exploitation of the earth and its resources in its diverse forms, leading to the deplorable state of the physical environmental as well as the ecological degradation in societies globally[28].

It highlights how the oppressive system work hand in hand to facilitate the exploitation of women and nature. All through the centuries, nature has been depicted in different perspectives which have been both positive and negative. Sushi perspective include feminine, feeder, life-giver, wild, unprocessed, etc. Though nature is first portrayed as a source of life, it is equally regarded as an object to be controlled due to its unstable features. The culture of the West is founded on the notion of supremacy and oppression. Nature has been exploited continuously over the centuries for the profit of man, especially during the colonial and scientific revolution era in the West. Therefore, the concept, Ecofeminism, exemplifies the structural imbalances of power principally the masculine activities, supported by patriarchal societies that affect the natural environment and their connection with the subjugation of women, children and all oppressed groups.

Ecofeminism emphasizes that the main cause of the problem is the masculine attitudes and mind sets that have been inbuilt in the mind and our institutions for generations. This masculine notion is being displayed in our social relationships based on power dynamics in the world stage, and in our everyday lives. This perception of masculine behaviour is not human being central, that is responsible for the illogical conception and actions displayed[29]. Over time, this patriarchal, cultural and traditional exaltation of the masculine, over all that is termed as feminine, has proved to be of negative consequences in the world today with the incidences of war, nuclear weapons and the ecological problems raging worldwide. Therefore, when critics use this theory in the analysis of a literary work, these links are examined in order to foster equitable societies[27]. This has led to their emancipation and have placed the woman on the aspirations to escape the role written for her by society.

Furthermore, ecofeminism examines the connections between the oppression of the women and the exploitation of the natural environment. It posits that all forms of oppression are connected. As women and children are subjected and dominated, that is how the members of the natural

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

environment are dominated and exploited. Thus the oppression of woman and the environment, also referred to as the natural world by patriarchal structures. Ecofeminism cannot be discussed in isolation without the other, because they are both dominated and oppressed by established patriarchal structures.

In presenting these perspectives, the research shed more light on how African female writers not only expose the challenges of ecological and gender injustices but also inspire transformative pathways toward sustainable development. Their works serve as a call to action, urging for a harmonious coexistence between humans and the environment, anchored in principles of justice, equality, and sustainability. The study examines ecofeminism perspective in selected works of African Female Writers on women and nature sustainability, through an ecofeminist lens using selected works of five African female authors: *Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, by Neshani Andreas, *Yellow Yellow* by Kaine Agary, *Nervous Condition* by Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Female Fear Factory* by Pulma Dineo Qqola, and *Women at Point Zero* by Nawaal Elshadawi. These books are selected because of their close affinity to the thematic ecofeminist discourse of the study.

The stories, forming the ideologies of African Feminism are not entirely the same even within Africa, as many women face different social realities depending on the sub-region on the continent. Therefore an extensive comparative study will be done, to know how the women and the environment are interdependent on each other for existence. Also, the aim is to analyse and interprete the textual and conceptual essence of ecofeminism in the selected books and analyse the impact on psychological, economical and social effects on women and the environment for sustenance on human lives.

Also, in identifying women with nature, the writers celebrate and recognize their independence and co-existence. Although, some ecofeminists in social ecology, say, nature fails to bring comfort to the troubled world and thus, reflects the world through its contradictions and antagonisms[35].An example is the representation of nature in Ver's *Under the Tongue* (1996) and *Butterfly Burning* (1998), both illustrates such contradictions. Alice Walker's *The Colour Purple* (1982), is an

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

illustration of nature, as Solace in Troubled world. The idea of dominating nature has its origins in the domination of humans by humans, that is, ecological problem are located in oppressive patriarchal, hierarchial and elitists structures in human society[36].

In recent decades, the intersection between gender and ecology has inspired critical discourses in global feminist thought. Among these, eco-motherism stands out as a theoretical and ethical model that situates women, especially mothers, as primary agents in the care and preservation of the environment. Within African literature, this concept resonates deeply because of the continent's cultural connection between fertility, land, and motherhood. The term 'eco-motherism' merges ecological consciousness with the maternal ethic of care, highlighting women's roles as both nurturers of human life and protectors of the natural world.

This study investigates how African female writers articulate eco-motherist ideals in their literary works, discussing the intricate relationship between women and nature. It examines the thematic intersections of environmental and gender issues, emphasizing how though, are affected by patriarchal structures that exploit both women and the environment, and were still able to be portrayed as agents of change, emphasizing their pivotal role in environmental sustainability and advocating for a more equitable relationship between humanity and nature. By intertwining narratives of ecological preservation with gender equity, these literary works offer a critique socio-political systems that perpetuate inequality and environmental harm. The selected texts; Pumla Dineo Gqola's *Female Fear Factory,* Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero,* Neshani Andreas' *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* Kaine Agary's *Yellow Yellow,* and Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions,* offer rich portrayals of women's lived realities in patriarchal and ecologically vulnerable societies. Each text, though different in setting and tone, exemplifies how the women try to assert their rights and establish a collaborative relationship between them and nature in the patriarchal society despites the ill-treatment being meted to them. By situating these narratives within an ecofeminist and maternal framework, this study aims to

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

illuminate how African female writers employ the motif of motherhood and care as tools of ecological and social resistance.

Moreover, the title, "Eco-motherism Reading of works of Selected African Female Writers" is in tandem with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It blends ecological consciousness with maternal ethics and African womanist principles, emphasizing women's nurturing relationship with the earth, communal survival, and sustainable coexistence with nature. In literature, it calls attention to how women's oppression and environmental degradation intertwine, and how reclaiming both is key to sustainable development.

Below are some themes that relate to specific SDGs and the selected novels:

Eco-Motherism and the SDGs

SDG 1: No Poverty:.It goal is to end poverty in all its forms everywhere. The Eco-motherist reading of these novels discusses Poverty in African female-centered narratives is often linked to environmental and patriarchal exploitation. For example, In *Yellow-Yellow*, Zilayefa's poverty is intensified by oil pollution in the Niger Delta, which destroys the livelihood of her community (fishing and farming). Eco-motherism interprets this as ecological and economic violence against both women and nature. In *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, Mee Ali and Kauna endure economic deprivation worsened by patriarchal land ownership and drought, which is an eco-maternal struggle for survival. The Eco-motherist call here is for economic empowerment through ecological restoration, aligning with SDG 1's aim to eradicate poverty sustainably.

SDG 5: Gender Equality: It's goal is to achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls. The Eco-motherist reading insists that ecological and gender justice are inseparable. In *Woman at Point Zero,* Firdaus's revolt symbolizes resistance against patriarchal oppression that mirrors environmental domination that both are systems of control that exploit life-giving forces. *Female Fear Factory* unmasks how fear is used as a tool to silence women and maintain structural inequality. Nervous Conditions shows Tambu's struggle for education as a form of ecological

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

rebirth, breaking free from patriarchal traditions that suppress feminine intellect and agency. Eco-motherism thus advances SDG 5 by redefining empowerment through reconnection with nature and self-sovereignty.

SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation: It's goal is to ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all. The eco-motherist reading is that water is a maternal symbol in Eco-motherist thought because it nourishes, cleanses, and life-sustaining. For example, in *Yellow-Yellow*, polluted rivers reflect the violated womb of nature, which is a maternal metaphor of contamination and neglect. Also, in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* scarcity of clean water affects domestic and agricultural life, symbolizing how women bear the heaviest burden of environmental neglect. Eco-motherism demands protection of water sources as extensions of womanhood, linking environmental care to maternal duty and social equity.

SDG 10: Reduced Inequalities: It's goal is to reduce inequality within and among countries. The eco-motherist reading is that, eco-motherism challenges hierarchies of gender, class, and ecological power. For example, in *Nervous Conditions*, racial and gender inequalities intersect; Tambu's mother's suffering in rural poverty reflects colonial and patriarchal double marginalization. For example, *Female Fear Factory* denounces the systemic inequalities that sustain fear economies that is mean against women's autonomy. Eco-motherism here mirrors SDG 10 by envisioning egalitarian, eco-inclusive societies where both women and the environment thrive without exploitation.

SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production: It's goal is to ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. The eco-motherist reading discusses eco-motherism critiques consumerist exploitation of natural and human resources, advocating moderation, recycling, and community-centered living. Taking for example, *Yellow-Yellow* critiques the oil industry's reckless extraction and the community's loss of traditional, sustainable livelihoods. In *Woman at Point Zero,* capitalist commodification of women's bodies parallels environmental

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

commodification, which is both driven by consumption and profit motives. The Eco-motherist vision aligns with restorative production and eco-ethical consumption.

SDG 13: Climate Action: It's goal is to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. The eco-motherist reading sees women as climate custodians, bearing the emotional and physical burden of ecological crises. For example, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* portrays drought and land degradation as threats to community cohesion and women's well-being. *Yellow-Yellow* dramatizes oil spills and deforestation, making visible the feminized suffering of climate impact. Eco-motherism calls for maternal guardianship of the planet, a compassionate climate ethics resonating with SDG 13.

SDG 15: Life on Land: It's goal is to protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems. The eco-motherist reading is that land in eco-motherism is a mother figure, embodying fertility and continuity. In *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, the land is not just soil but a living womb that sustains and mirrors women's pain and hope. In *Yellow-Yellow*, damaged farmlands echo the destruction of women's dignity and identity. Eco-motherism advocates for reconnection to land stewardship, aligning with SDG 15's call for sustainable land use.

SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions: It's goal is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. The eco-motherist reading views peace as holistic, not only political peace but ecological harmony and gender justice. *Female Fear Factory* exposes how patriarchal violence destabilizes peace in both domestic and social spheres. *Woman at Point Zero* shows how unjust systems breed rebellion and internal collapse, absence of institutional justice mirrors ecological decay. Eco-motherism aligns with SDG 16 by calling for institutional compassion, justice, and eco-gender peacebuilding.

SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals: It's goal is to strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize global partnerships for sustainable development. The Eco-motherist reading thrives on collective agency, sisterhood, and interdependence. In *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, the

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

friendship between Mee Ali and Kauna reflects female solidarity as a model of sustainable partnership. Across all the novels, community bonds, shared ecological consciousness, and intergenerational mentorship embody grassroots partnerships for sustainability. Eco-motherism calls for collaborative global and local efforts that integrate gender, environment, and cultural values into sustainability action, which perfectly reflecting SDG 17.

Conclusion Through Eco-motherism, these novels collectively highlight that sustainable development is impossible without the liberation of women and restoration of nature. Women, as both nurturers and environmental stewards, become symbols of resilience and hope in the pursuit of sustainable futures, where ecological, economic, and emotional well-being coexist in balance.

1.2 Justification of the Study

The justification for this research title, "Eco-motherist Reading of works of selected African Female Writers" is that the five selected novels were chosen randomly from five African countries in order to examine how women in different sub regions in African countries, nurture, care and play the role of motherhood as models for environmental ethics and sustainable living.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Critical studies have been carried out on issues of women and nature under patriarchial hegemony and the negative effects on both. Also, some critical appraisal of some scholars have viewed the association of women and nature under the patriarchal domination in a beneficial way. But this work explores the beneficial effects of their symbiotic interconnectedness on sustainability in the society on how they care, nurture and play the role of motherhood in each of the five selected countries and African society at large.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

1.4 Aim and Objectives of the study

Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to examine the interconnectedness between women and nature for sustainability in a patriarchal society from an Eco-motherism perspective in selected African countries on how they care and play the role of motherhood as models for environmental ethics and sustainable living.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study are to:

1). identify the maternal bond between women and nature in the selected novels

2). analyse eco-motherism themes, motifs, imagery of birth, fertility and renewal, to symbolize ecological rebirth and social transformation in the selected novels

3). discuss the beneficial effects of the maternal bond between women and nature on human sustainability in each of the selected novels

1.5 Research Questions

1). how do the selected novels present the maternal bond between women and nature

2). what eco-motherism themes, motifs, imagery of birth, fertility and renewal, to symbolize ecological rebirth and social transformation in the selected novels

3). what are the beneficial effects of the symbiotic relationships of women and nature on human sustainability in each of the selected novel

1.6 Significance of the study

This study contributes to the existing body of research on feminist discourse in Afro centric context and the growing body of African feminist and ecological literary criticism by emphasizing the

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

maternal bond between women and nature. It adopts an eco-motherist reading of *Yellow-Yellow* by Kaine Agary, *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi, *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas, and *Female Fear Factory* by Pumla Dineo Gqola, the research highlights the intersection between womanhood, motherhood, and environmental consciousness within African socio-cultural contexts.

Firstly, the study deepens the understanding of Eco-motherism as an emerging theoretical framework that centers on women's nurturing roles as symbolic and practical agents of ecological balance, healing, and renewal. It demonstrates how African female writers reinterpret the maternal figure as both a protector of life and a restorer of environmental and social harmony, thereby challenging the patriarchal and exploitative systems that oppress both women and nature.

Secondly, this study provides a context-specific ecological feminist perspective that reflects African realities, values, and communal identities. It shifts the discourse from Eurocentric ecofeminist paradigms to a more indigenous and Afrocentric approach that recognizes women's lived experiences in relation to land, fertility, and sustainability.

Furthermore, the study contributes to gender and literary studies by unveiling how these writers employ narrative voices, symbols, and imagery of fertility, birth, and renewal to articulate the interconnectedness of environmental degradation and female subjugation. Through this, it fosters a broader understanding of how literature can serve as a transformative tool for environmental and social advocacy.

Finally, this research will be valuable to scholars, students, and environmental activists, as it bridges the gap between feminist literary theory and ecological consciousness in African literature. It also opens new pathways for further studies on how maternal and ecological identities can inspire sustainable gender relations and environmental ethics within African societies.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

1.7 Scope of the study

The scope of the study is to critically examine the interconnectedness between women and nature (environment) in five selected African female authored works on nurturing, caring and motherhood. It is to also encourage further studies by future researchers on Eco-motherism studies to enhance great African societal development through sustainability.

1.8 Limitation of the study

The study is basically on the selected works of African Female Writers which is written in English. This means that some fictional works written in local languages will not be explored as they fall outside the scope of the study. In addition, only those with an environmental orientation and written by black female writers will be used. This is in conformity to the scope of the study, which is on the relationship between black women and the environment. The study will also be limited to the narratives which are set within a specified time frame, the colonial and postcolonial period. The study did not cover traveling to those different countries concern because of pausity of funds, in other to interview some women, so as to air their views and to substantiate the study more.

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

Ecofeminism: This is a philosophical and activist movement that explores the connections between the oppression of women and the degradation of nature. Ecofeminists argue that patriarchal societies perpetuate both sexism and environmental destruction.

Eco-motherism: It is a concept that blends ecological (environmental) concerns with maternal or mother-centered perspectives. It emphasizes the role of women, mist especially, mothers as natural caregivers and protectors of the environment, linking the nurturing of life (as mothers do) with the nurturing of nature.

Women: In the context of ecofeminism and Eco-motherism, women are often seen as having a unique relationship with nature due to their historical roles as caregivers, nurturers, and custodians of natural resources.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Men: In the context of ecofeminism, men are often associated with patriarchal dominance over both women and nature, perpetuating exploitation and destruction.

Nature: The natural world, encompassing ecosystems, biodiversity, and the physical environment, which is often seen as being exploited and degraded by human activities.

Patriarchy: A social system where men hold power and dominate women, often perpetuating gender-based oppression and environmental degradation.

Culture: The values, beliefs, and practices of a society, which can either promote or hinder sustainability and gender equality.

Environment: The external surroundings in which humans and other species exist, including natural resources, ecosystems, and biodiversity.

Resources: Natural resources, such as water, land, and minerals, which are often exploited and depleted by human activities.

Hegemony: The dominant power and influence exerted by one group (e.g., men, corporations) over others, often perpetuating inequality and environmental degradation.

Sustainability: It means the ability to maintain or support a process, system or activity over time without depleting natural resources or causing harm to the environment, society, or economy. Gender equality and sustainable agriculture. Also, it meand maintainancr of ecological balance, conserve natural resources, and ensure social justice for present and future generations.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Endnotes

1. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations . *Gender inequality in food and agriculture are costing world and trillion.* FAO UN News @FAO/Vyacheslav Oseledko.news.un.org.FAO, 2023.

2. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations . *The Status of Women in agrifood systems overview*, Rome, Italy, page 16, FAO Publishing, FAO, 2023.

3. United Nations Development Programme Human Development Report (HDR), *"Breaking the Gridlock: Reimagining cooperation in a Polarized world* , March, undo.org. UNDP, Mar. 2024.

4. World Resources Institute Growing Resilience: *Unlocking the Potential of Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Resilience in Sub-Saharan-African,* worldbank. ord. WRI, 2025.

5. World Health Organization: *Technical Webinar on Gender, Climate Change and Health, climahealth.* info. WHO, Oct, 2024.

6. United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. *Lima Ministerial Declaration on Education and Awareness-raising: Integration of Climate Change into Education Systems* (PDF) FCC/CP/2014/10/Add.3-UNFCCC.unfccc.int, UNFCCC, 2015.

7. J. Davidson, Dankelman, and Irene. *Women and Environment in the Third World: Gender-sensitive environmental policies in Nigeria* 2023.**iigdpublishers.com**

8. S. Tony. *Myths, Traditions, and Mothers of the Nation: Some Thoughts on Efua Sutherland's Writing*. Cite Download (187-84) shared **Embed journal** contribution posted on 2024-11-14.

9. M. Carolyn, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution,* 2020, **Barnesandnoble.com**

10. L. Weaver, and Hill. *Women and Nature Sustainability, Gender and Sustainability: Learning from Women's Farming in Africa* 2020 mdpi.com

11. V. Shiva, K. Shiva, *Oneness vs the 1%: Shattering illusion, seeding freedom,* Chelsea Green, 2020.

12. P. Kümbet, *Pasajlar Distal Bilimler Dergisi: Ecofeminizm* **(Passages Social Sciences Journal:** *Safe filminde Eko-Hastalik ve Material (EKO) Feminist Baglam" (Eco-illness and Material (Eco) feminist Content in the film 'safe').* article 2025.

13. R. Mukherjee. *Feminist approaches to environmental politics,* **journal Contemporary Political Theory,** volume 24, pg (81-97), 2025

14. W. S. Brisson. *Women's Connectedness to Nature: An Ecofeminist Exploration.* Regis University, 2017. https://epublications.regis.edu.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

15. J. Ewah. *Females as Victims of Environmental Degradation in Contemporary Niger Delta Novels*. **Project Gurus**, October 27, 2023. https://projectgurus.com.ng.

16. A. Rodda. *Women and the Environment. Women and World Development Series.* **Amazon.com**, 1991. https://www.amazon.com.

17. B. Agarwal. *Bargaining and Gender Relations: Within and Beyond the Household*. **Feminist Economics** 3, no. 1 (1997). https://ideas.repec.org.

18. Emeribe, A.C. *Females as Major Victims of Environmental Degradation in the Nigeria Delta.* December 2, 2023. **Research Kings**. https://research.com.ng.

19. Jahan. *Role of Rural Women in Environment Conservation: A Case Study of Bangladesh Village*. **IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science** 24, no. 11 (November 2019): 58-65. https://www.iosrjournals.org.

20. F. Nasrin. *Women, Environment and Environmental Advocacy: Challenges for Bangladesh.* **Asian Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities** 1, no. 3 (February 10, 2020): 49-172.

21. P. G. Dineo. What is Slavery to Me?: Postcolonial/Slave Memory on Post Apartheid South Africa. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2010.

22. Y. Mohammed. *Ecofeminism and the politics of Land Ownership: A critical Analysis of Lynn Nottage's Ruined in Reflection of Materialist Ecofeminism in Lynn Nottage's Ruined,* **Journal of Education for Women,** 35 (3), 81-99, (2024).

23. M. Cavendish, Margaret Cavendish: Natural Philosopher and Feminist, in Lisa Walters and Brandie Siegfried, eds. Margaret Cavendish: An Interdisciplinary Perspective (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022), pp. 19-32.

24. S. Bandana. Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development. London: Zed, 1988. Terra Madre. Sopravvivere allo suiluppo. Torino: UTET, 2022.

25. J. Kurebwa. *A Critique of Conceptual Frameworks in Gender and Natural Resources Governance*, **International Journal of Social Ecology and Sustainable Development.** 13(1): 1-13, 2022

26. K. J. Warren. Ecological Feminism/ Introduction published online by Cambridge University Press: Hypatia: Volume 6- special issue: March 2020, pp1-2.

27. D.D. Vareba. Ecofeminism Reconceives Feminism in Potential Ecological Feminism. ACJOL.Org, 2022. https://acjol.org.

28. T. Clark. Ecological Grief & Anthropocene Horror, American imago, 77 (1), 61-89 https://doi.org/10.1353/aim.2020.0003

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

29. J. Birkeland. Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice (cited in Greta Farad's Ecofeminism: Women, animals, nature 1993:13

30. M. P. Eboh. *The Woman Being: Its Nature and Functions*, 2016, Journal: Dialogue and Universalism, issue 1, pg 7-17, publisher: Instytut Filozofii I socjologii Polskiej Akademi Nauk.

31. F. d'Eaubonne, . Le Féminisme ou la Mort. University of Virginia, 1974. Digitized June 27, 2008. Google Books. https://books.google.com.

32. O. Okuyade. Ecocriticism beyond Animist Intimations in *Things Fall Apart.* African Heritage Press, 2013.

33. L..Gruen. Revaluing Nature, in Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature, ed. Karen Warren (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 363.

34. A. S. Theresa. *Honouring Rosemary Radford Ruether: Feminism was her Libration,* **Feminist Theology**, vol 31, No 3, 2023.

35. C. M. Shaw. Disciplining the Black female body: Learning feminism in Africa and the United States. In I. M. Alexander-Floyd, C. M. McClaurin, & T. S. Deeb-Sossa (Eds.), Black feminist anthropology: Theory, politics, praxis, and poetics (25th anniversary ed., pp. xx–xx). Rutgers University Press, 2024.

36. C. Shelley. *Murray Bookchin and the value of democratic municipalism*. **European Journal of Politica**l Theory, 23(2), 163–181. https://doi.org/10.1177/14748851221128248, 2024.

37. A. Lynn. The Redefined Roles of Modern African Women as Envisaged in Nervous Conditions by Maureen Masika et al, 2001.

38. F. Adamu. Women Struggle and the Politics of Difference in Nigeria. African Gender Institute, February 2006. http://www.fu-berlin.de/sites/gpo/tagungen/tagungfeministperspectives/fatima_1_adamu.pdf.

39. N. Primo. Gender and Natural Resource Management: Livelihoods, Mobility, and Interventions. First published by Earthscan in the UK and USA in 2008.

40. C. Jackson. Doing What Comes Naturally? Women and Environment in Development." World Development, December 1993. https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X(93)90068-K.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual Studies

Eco-motherism is a concept that blends ecological (environmental) concerns with maternal or mother-centered perspectives. It emphasizes the role of women, especially mothers, as natural caregivers and protectors of the environment, linking the nurturing of life (as mothers do) with the nurturing of nature[1]. Eco-motherism suggests that, just as mothers care for their children, humans, most especially women, should care for the Earth. Women's traditional roles as nurturers and sustainer make them uniquely positioned to promote environmental awareness, conservation, and sustainability. Environmental degradation and the oppression of women are interconnected, both arising from systems of domination, exploitation, and patriarchy. It's often discussed within ecofeminism, where scholars argue that the exploitation of nature parallels the subjugation of women while Eco-motherism, in particular, celebrates maternal ethics of care, empathy, and responsibility as powerful tools for ecological preservation and social justice.

Eco-motherism is an ecological and feminist theory, which particularly resonate in post-colonial contexts like Africa. It merges the principles of ecofeminism, which draws connections between the exploitation of nature and the subjugation of women with the unique cultural concept of motherism.

Motherism: This is not merely the biological act of mothering. It is a philosophical and political stance that positions women, particularly in African societies, as the primary caregivers, nurturers, and sustain life, culture, and community. It is a generative, life-affirming force.

Eco-modernism is an interpretive stance that examines the intersections between ecology, modernity, and technology. It explores how modern institutions, scientific/technological practices, and urbanization reshape human relations with the nonhuman world, and how such transformations simultaneously offer possibilities (technological remediation, new social forms) and generate alienation, and ecological loss. Unlike ecofeminism (which emphasizes the linked domination of

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

women and nature), eco-modernist critique often pays attention to how technological/urban systems produce specific ecological and social relations, and whether modern solutions can be retooled for just, liveable futures.

Moreover, it reads how environmental harm and resource extraction disproportionately affect women's reproductive labour, giving, and bodily autonomy, and how maternal figures and maternal metaphors are mobilized (resisted or co-opted) within ecological crises. Eco-motherism attends to how mothering practices, women's bodily labour, and kinship networks intersect with environmental injustice and political economy. It asks questions on how does motherhood shape response to ecological harm, and how do environmental harms reshape motherhood?

Eco-motherism posits that women have a unique and intimate relationship with the environment because their traditional roles (providing food, water, and medicine for their families) make them directly dependent on and knowledgeable about natural resources. Therefore, when the land is poisoned, women are the first and most profoundly affected. Their bodies, their labour, and their cultural roles become the front line of the ecological crisis.

2.1.1. Historical Background of Eco-motherism

Eco-motherism, is a more recent development, that blends ecological consciousness with maternal ethics. It presents motherhood not merely as biological reproduction but as a moral stance of empathy, protection, and renewal. It conceptualizes 'maternal thinking' as a practice grounded in care and responsibility, values essential to ecological ethics[2]. A writer also distinguishes between the experience and institution of motherhood, asserting that women's nurturing instincts, if freed from patriarchal constraints, could inspire social transformation[3]. In African feminist discourse, writers like Wangari Maathai embody eco-motherist principles through activism that unites environmental restoration with women's empowerment. It is a branch or evolution of ecofeminism, focusing on motherhood as an ecological and ethical stance[4]. It's theoretical focus examines the interconnection between the subjugation of women and the exploitation of nature under patriarchal

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

systems. It analyzes how African female writers represent women as nurturers and protectors of the environment It also explores how female characters' maternal roles extend to environmental care, restoration, and resistance to ecological harm.

Eco-motherism is a contemporary theoretical framework that emerges from the intersection of ecofeminism and African motherhood ideologies. It builds on the idea that women, particularly African women, share a unique and nurturing bond with nature, one that reflects their roles as mothers, caregivers, and custodians of life. To understand eco-motherism, it is important to trace its roots through the historical evolution of ecofeminist thought, African ecological philosophy, and maternalist traditions.

It takes its roots in Ecofeminism between 1970s–1980s. It's conceptual foundation lies in ecofeminism, a movement that arose in the 1970s alongside global environmental activism and second-wave feminism. Thinkers such as Françoise d'Eaubonne, who coined the term "ecofeminism" in 1974, argued that the oppression of women and the degradation of the environment stem from the same patriarchal and capitalist systems that value domination and exploitation over care and sustainability[5]. Ecofeminists like Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies, and Carolyn Merchant expanded this idea by emphasizing that women's closeness to nature through childbearing, food production, and water collection, positions them as both victims and potential saviours in the struggle against ecological destruction.

Ecofeminist Thought (1990s–Present) is Africanized In Africa, when scholars and writers began to reinterpret ecofeminism through indigenous lenses, grounding it in African cosmology and communal life. African ecofeminism differs from Western strands by emphasizing communal harmony, spirituality, and women's lived experiences rather than abstract feminist theory. African literary voices such as Bessie Head, Ama Ata Aidoo, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Nawal El Saadawi, and Zaynab Alkali explored how colonialism, patriarchy, and environmental degradation intersect in African societies. Their works portrayed women not merely as victims but as agents of ecological renewal and moral consciousness.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Eco-motherism emerges in (21st Century) as a distinct African ecofeminist perspective that merges environmental consciousness with the symbolism of motherhood. It highlights how African women's mothering roles extend beyond the biological, encompassing the nurturing of society, culture, and the earth. The term "eco-motherism" gained traction in recent African scholarship that seeks to decolonize ecofeminism, arguing that the Western narrative often romanticizes nature and womanhood. Eco-motherism instead presents African motherhood as an ethical model of environmental stewardship, rooted in values such as care, responsibility, and interdependence. This framework also responds to postcolonial realities about where environmental crises, poverty, and gender inequality intersect. African eco-motherist writers and theorists show how women's maternal instincts drive them to protect land, resist exploitation, and preserve communal well-being[6].

In African literature, eco-motherism finds expression in texts such as: Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood* which explores the burdens of maternal expectations and social change. Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* that depicts environmental exploitation and female identity. Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* shows women's struggle for self and environmental balance. Neshani Andreas's *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* links fertility, land, and womanhood, Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero* illustrated resistance to patriarchal and ecological oppression, while Pumla Dineo Gqola's *Female Fear Factory,* connects bodily autonomy and spatial freedom to ecological justice. The contemporary relevance eco-motherism today serves as both a literary lens and an ethical paradigm for environmental and gender discourse in Africa. It calls for:

i). Recognition of women's ecological wisdom.

ii). Restoration of balance between human development and nature.

iii). Empowerment of women as key agents in sustainability and community resilience.

In essence, eco-motherism takes its roots from ecofeminism. Ecofeminism takes its root in Ecocriticism and transforms the maternal metaphor into a political and ecological philosophy,

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

asserting that nurturing, whether of children, land, or society, is central to both gender justice and environmental survival.

Theoretical Framework

2.1.1.1. Ecocriticism

Ecocriticism is a critical study in literature that investigates humanity's relationship to the environment, i. e. It is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment, emphasizing how writers portray nature and how those portrayals reflect or challenge human attitudes toward the natural world. It is sometimes called "environmental literary criticism."

This can be found in many forms, including literature, film, or the arts. Ecocriticism aims to evaluate how humans interact with the natural world and the goal of improving how we treat the environment, provides more compassionate and productive ways to coexist with nature and reverse some of the damages. Eco-critical texts can show humanity's relationship to nature in both positive and negative term.

Ecocriticism is an interdisciplinary literary and cultural theory that studies the relationship between literature (or other cultural texts) and the natural environment. It explores how nature, ecology, and environmental issues are represented in texts, and how such representations shape our understanding of humanity's place within the natural world.

The term "ecocriticism" was popularized in the 1990s by literary scholars such as Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, particularly in the book The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology (1996). However, its intellectual roots lie in earlier environmental movements and Romantic literature (e.g., Wordsworth, Thoreau). The main concerns;

Ecocriticism asks questions like:

How is nature represented in literature?

What roles do humans play in the ecosystem as depicted in a text?

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

How do cultural beliefs and social practices affect the environment?

Can literature inspire ecological awareness or environmental activism?

The Key Themes:

i. Nature vs. culture: examining how texts separate or connect humans and nature.

ii. Environmental ethics: moral questions about human treatment of the environment.

iii. Ecojustice: linking ecological concerns with social justice and human rights.

iv. Anthropocentrism: critiquing human-centered worldviews.

v. Sustainability and ecological balance: promoting harmony between humans and the environment.

Some notable Ecocritics are; Cheryll Glotfelty, Lawrence Buell, Greg Garrard, Jonathan Bate, Kate Soper

Conclusively, Ecocriticism studies how stories, poems, and plays talk about nature, whether they romanticize it, exploit it, or encourage respect for it, and how these representations influence the way we think about our planet.

2.1.2. Ecofeminism

The term Ecofeminism, was coined by Francois d'Eaubonne, a French feminist in her book[5]. The Ecofeminist movement was birthed out of many conferences and workshops that took place in the United States by a coalition of academic and professional women during the late 1970s and early 1980s. They met to discuss different ways by which feminism and environmentalism might be combined to promote respect for women and the natural world. In the conference, the connections between feminism, militarism, health and ecology were discussed. The theory states that a male centred culture was first created by the white western patriarchal societies. Patriarchy causes social hierarchies and qualities were created by male-centered culture and it gives superiority to men over

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

all other beings. This created inequality in the society and thus strengthen the male dominance. This led to the formation of the Women's Pentagon Action, Antimilitarist, Anti-nuclear war, and other groups through which women championed protest against degradation of the environment and oppression of women. Such groups like Chipko Movement in India, Appiko Movement in India, Save Silent Valley Movement in India, Anti-militarist movement in Europe and the United States. Movement against Dumping of Hazardous Wastes in the United States, and Green Belt Movement in Kenya also emerged. Women through such ecofeminist movements staged a demonstration, which is refers to as the "resistance politics" and demanded for environmental preservation and regeneration[6].

The concept of ecofeminism is further developed by King in 1976 in her book which appeared in The Nation, King challenges all Americans to have a rethink over the ways in which their belief systems allow for the exploitative use of the earth and the further oppression of women[6]. The interest that some feminine writers have about the great similarities between women and nature made it possible to have the emergence of Ecofeminism. Ecofeminism is an ideology that have interest in environmentalism and the relationship between women and the earth, as foundational to its analysis and practice. The movement pivots on the concept of gender to analyse the relationship between humans and the natural world.

Ecofeminist analysis, explores the connections between women and nature in culture, economy, religion, politics, literature and iconography, and addresses the parallels between the oppression of nature and the oppression of women.These parallels include but are not limited to seeing women and nature as property, men as curators of culture and women as curators of nature, and how men dominate women and humans dominate nature. Ecofeminism emphasizes that both women and nature must be respected. [7,8] Some group of ecofeminists believe that associating nature as mother and as feminine by men is harmful both to women and to the environmental movement. Men refer to nature as wild woman and indeed, the desire to dominate the wild woman that is, nature, was certainly used as a justification for all manner of environmental degradation in the past. Taking

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Africa as an example, patriachal structure allows capitalist, which have caused environmental degradation of great monumental consequences on women. It discusses the fundamental issues affecting women alongside the natural environment[7].

Ecofeminist sees the need to address the issue of exploitation of women and nature. Exploitation causes forms of inequality, which cause imbalance like classism, ageism, colonialism, sexism. It is a movement that sees women and nature as being exploited by the Male-dominant system, socially, politically and philosophically. It shows the interconnectedness of nature and women. Women and nature are deeply intertwined and connected in multiple ways. Women are embedded in nature and thus, the exploitation of nature could be seen as an exploitation of women as well. In as much as there is continuation in the exploitation of nature, there will also be exploitation of women.

Moreover, Ecofeminism links the exploitation of nature and women to a partiarchial hegemony. Ecofeminism challenges patriarchy and its oppressive structures which are pervasive but hidden. It is this untoward attitudes of men to the women in the society, that got the attention of the African Female Writers to express their feelings through their literary wits, and hence, sought to examine it in their writings. African women were made to bear the odium of inferiority and repressed pride of womanhood because of the patriarchal paradigm shift in the society. The women are the subaltern in the society, which can be seen, but are not to talk in the society. This spurn the female writers into action, in order to emancipate the women from the patriarchal pangs and allowed them to be seen and to be heard and redefine their thoughts and give them confidence, allow them to express themselves and have hope in Africa and the diaspora. Their works centres on gender issues, different types of oppression and the essence of revolution in the patriarchal society in order to nip the problem in the bud.

Therefore, ecofeminism practice is centered more around dismantling the patriarchy and the belief that women and nature are commodities that can be exploited. Ecofeminist belief that there are conceptual correlations between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature. They are

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

of the opinion that the traditional gender system in conjunction with globalization has a significant bearing on today's environmental predicament.

Ecofeminism therefore challenges all relations of dominations and superiority. Its goal is not just to confront the patriarchal power, but to transform the structure of power itself. Thus, dominations of nature-psyche and sexuality, human oppression and non-nature and the cultural historic position held by women in relation to these forms of domination are the principles of ecofeminism theory. On a more serious note, women occupy an intricately woven position in the society and are gladiator of womanhood. Through out history, a few exceptional women have indeed managed to resist the full pressure of patriarchal ideology, becoming conscious of their own oppression and voicing their own opposition to male power[8]. The women are tired of patriarchal hegemony. The poem below, represents African feminism and institutionalized patriarchy, respectively. The poet's persona holds that:

> We feel the claws of paternalism
> Mistaken as criticism
> Disempowerment disguised as empowerment
> Opportunism wearing the toga of generosity
> You blow the horn of humiliation
> And spread the tunes of greenhouse gases
> Stop before we suffocate
> But we are the cat with nine lives!
> We shall not die[9].

Ecofeminism foregrounds that patriarchal structures justify their dominance through dualistic hierarchies i.e. mind/body, male/female, human/animal, spirit/matter, culture/nature, and white/non-white. As a result, established oppressive systems continue to manifest abusive powers by reinforcing assumptions of these binaries making them sacred through religious and scientific constructs[10]. Feminism and environmentalism are allied struggles, but that the very antagonistic forces of oppression are seen to prevent women's full identity as women and natures full realization

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

as nature are one and the same[11]. Ecofeminism raises the consciousness of women to the reality that the devaluation of the earth is the devaluation of women. Women should see the link as not a false construction of weakness, but as a strong unifying force that clarifies the violation of women and the earth as part of the same drama of male control[12].

On same page with ecofeminism tenets, a scholar, sees the strength of ecofeminism as a theory that combats ecological destruction and patriarchal domination without succumbing to the totalizing impulses of masculinist politics[13]. Hence, ecofeminism is a politics of resistance that operates against patriarchal power. The women that lend their voices towards liberating women out of the social and political transformation about the issue concerning feminism and the environment are; Rosemary Radford Ruether, Ivone Gebara, Vandana Shiva, Susan Griffin, Alice Walker, Sun Ai Lee-Park, Paula Gunn Allen, Monica Sjöö, Greta Gaard, and Karen Warren are among the many voices still speaking from ecofeminist positions[6]. Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination[14]. On this note, women must unite to the demands for the women's movement with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socio-economic relations and the underlying values of this (modern industrial) society[15].

The determination of the women gave them courage which contravene the expected patriachal norms. Women had purported to lend their voices in the society. They are outrageous by the treatment meted out to them by the patriarchal society which spurn them to revolutionized and assert their rights in the society. They want equality for women in society. Women are viewed as part of society who deserve to be literated, well-educated, and learn a lot of things formally or informally. Education can avoid women being exploited by the jobs which force them to work hard as men do, the jobs that bring risk for their safety because probably there are harassment around them, and also the jobs that do not fulfill them with enough salary. Meanwhile, as member in a family, women have rights to express their thoughts, ideas, and chance to make important decision

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

in the family. The main point is not having the unlimited space for expressing themselves, but women deserve to be safe from the dominant patriarchal ideology which oppress them physically and mentally.

This study adopts Ecofeminist and Eco-motherism Theory as its primary theoretical framework, complemented by insights from Maternal Theory. Ecofeminism provides the basis for understanding the interconnected oppression of women and the environment, while Maternal Theory emphasizes the ethics of care and nurturing inherent in eco-motherism. African Womanism situates these ideas within African cultural contexts, portraying women as custodians of both life and land. Together, these frameworks illuminate how African female writers represent eco-motherist consciousness as both a literary and socio-ecological discourse[16].

The thematic exploration of the novels, highlight the interconnectedness between women, nature, and sustainability, that is, ecological consciousness with maternal ethics of care, results in Eco-motherism, that is, Ecological consciousness + Maternal ethics = Eco-motherism. It calls for treating the Earth as a "mother" who deserves protection, respect, and love, just as mothers sustain life.

The echo of Eco-motherism across these five texts

i. A philosophy of nurture that aligns the female spirit with ecological and communal renewal.

ii. A vision of balance, emphasizing restoration, empathy, and interdependence between humans and nature.

iii. A literary ethic of care, portraying women not merely as victims but as custodians of environmental and emotional ecosystems.

iv. A pathway to holistic liberation, where healing the earth and healing the self are one and the same.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

These writers collectively construct an eco-maternal epistemology which is a worldview that sees womanhood as life-affirming energy vital for the planet's moral and ecological regeneration.

These selected literary works offer rich terrain to examine how women navigate oppressive systems through their resilience and reclaim their agency in ways that promote sustainability and harmony with their environment.

Table 2.1: Ecofeminism and Eco-motherism in Literature

Concept	**ThemeDescription**	**Literary Examples (African Texts)**
Ecofeminism	Women- Nature Connection	Highlights the symbolic and material link between women and nature; both are oppressed under patriarchal and capitalist systems. *Yellow Yellow* — Zilayefa' struggle mirrors environmental pollution and exploitation of the Niger Delta. *Nervous Conditions* — Nyasha's bodily rebellion reflects ecological and social imbalance
	Environmental Exploitation	Analyzes how the destruction of land, water, and resources parallels the exploitation of women. *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* — Farmland fertility reflects women's emotional and physical wellbeing; women's suffering mirrors land depletion
	Patriarchy and Ecological Violence	Shows how patriarchal domination results in violence toward both women and the environment *Woman at Point Zero* — Firdaus's body is treated like an extractive resource, paralleling ecological damage in patriarchal societies.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

	Resistance and Eco-Activism	Explores how women resist environmental and gender injustices *Female Fear Factory* — Gqola's feminist critique exposes how controlling women's bodies is a form of systemic violence similar to ecological destruction.
Eco-motherism	Maternal Care and Environmental Nurture	Emphasizes the mothering instinct as a model for protecting nature; nurturance of children extends to nurturance of the environment *Yellow Yellow* — Mama's protective role mirrors attempts to preserve cultural and ecological purity.
	Communal Motherhood & Land Stewardship	Links collective mothering roles to communal land care, sustainability, and environmental healing *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* — Kauna and Mee Ali's solidarity reflects communal care; the community's relationship with the land parallels maternal duties
	Birth, Fertility & Ecological Renewal	Uses birth, growth, fertility, and cycles of regeneration as metaphors for ecological survival and women's resilience *Nervous Conditions* — Ma'Shingayi embodies the burden of reproductive labor and ecological scarcity; her suffering symbolizes both cultural and environmental degradation
	Women as Custodians of the Earth guardians of their environment	Frames women—especially mothers—as spiritual, cultural, and ecological *Woman at Point Zero* — Though Firdaus rejects traditional motherhood, her symbolic rebirth before death represents a cleansing of corrupt systems. *Yellow Yellow* — The Niger Delta is personified as a

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

		violated "mother," linking motherhood to ecological suffering.
	Healing, Restoration & Sustainability	Women's nurturing roles become metaphors for healing damaged ecosystems and rebuilding societies. *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* — Women rely on mutual support to heal emotional wounds, mirroring the land's need for renewal. *Female Fear Factory* — Rejecting fear becomes a metaphor for restoring both human dignity and ecological balance

. .

2.1.2.1. Maternal Theory

Maternal Theory is a feminist theoretical framework that explores motherhood, mothering practices, and maternal identity as important areas of intellectual, social, and political study. It emerged as a response to the tendency of early Western feminism to view motherhood as a site of oppression or domestic confinement. The Key Theorists is Adrienne Rich, she was born in 1976. She distinguishes between Motherhood as institution (controlled by patriarchy), and Motherhood as experience (empowering and creative). Also is Sara Ruddick, in her Maternal Thinking (1989), she views mothering as a form of intellectual and ethical practice involving care, nurturance, and responsibility. Nancy Chodorow too studies how mothering influences identity formation and gender roles. It analyzes how women's experiences as mothers; biological, social, emotional, or symbolic, which shape their identities, relationships, and representations in literature and culture. It focuses on:

i. The experiences of mothers, which can be emotional, physical, and psychological aspects of mothering.

ii. Social expectations; how culture, patriarchy, and religion define "good" or "bad" mothers.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

iii. Representation in literature; how motherhood and maternal figures are portrayed.

iv. Motherhood as power; exploring care, compassion, and reproduction as sources of strength, not limitation.

v. Symbolism of fertility and nurturing; linking the mother figure to nature, community, and renewal. a. Depictions of strong matriarchs

Maternal Theory, when adapted to the African context, becomes a powerful lens for understanding: Women's identities, Communal structures, Ecological responsibilitie, Resistance movements

Literary representations of African womanhood

It recognizes motherhood as both an intimate and politically significant experience that shapes African women's lives, activism, and cultural narratives.

In African literature and thought, maternal theory is expanded through indigenous and communal motherhood concepts. Motherhood goes beyond biological birth, it includes:

Social motherhood: caring for community members.

Communal motherhood: collective responsibility for children and environment. Its shared labour among women reflects collective survival (seen in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu).*

Spiritual motherhood: nurturing moral and ecological balance.

Thus, African maternal theory overlaps with Eco-motherism, emphasizing how mothers and nature share nurturing, protective, and regenerative roles.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Table 2.2. Maternal Theory in Literature

Theme	Description	Literary Example
Motherhood as Empowerment	Mothers resist oppression through nurturing, wisdom, and moral strength.	*The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*: Mee Ali as a nurturing healer and peace-maker
Motherhood and Suffering	Patriarchal or social structures suppress maternal identity.	*Woman at Point Zero:* Firdaus's rejection of imposed motherhood and *Female Fear Factory*
Motherhood and Ecology	The mother symbolizes the Earth: both life-givers and victims of exploitation.	*Yellow Yellow:* the sea/mother symbol reflects identity and fertility
Communal Motherhood	Women support and sustain their communities collectively.	*Nervous Conditions*: Ma'Shingayi's endurance and Nyasha's rebellion balance maternal legacy and transformation

Conclusively, Maternal Theory is a feminist theory that studies the meaning, roles, and experiences of motherhood. It focuses on Identity, power, care, and representation of mothers in culture and literature. It's core values are; nurturing, empathy, responsibility, creativity, and moral guidance. It relates to Eco-motherism. Both view motherhood as a natural and ecological force that sustains life and promotes harmony between humans and nature.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

2.1.2.2. Afro-centric Discourse

In Afro-centric discourse, feminist thought takes on diverse and culturally grounded forms that respond to the specific historical, social, and political realities of African women. These feminist discourses are distinct from Western feminism, as they integrate African cosmology, colonial histories, indigenous traditions, and communal value[17] .Below are the major types of feminist discourse within Afro-centric discourse:

1. African Womanism. The Key proponents are Clenora Hudson-Weems, Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi. Their main focus centers on African women's experiences without imitating Western feminism. It emphasizes family, community, and complementarity rather than gender antagonism and advocates balance between men and women in resisting colonial and racial oppression. It also recognizes racism, classism, and colonialism as key factors shaping African women's struggles[18]. Examples of it in literature is seen in characters who promote harmony, motherhood, and social survival e.g., *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas.

2. Motherism: The key proponent is Catherine Acholonu. It focuses on views of motherhood, nurture, and nature as the essence of womanhood and the source of social regeneration and advocates peace, tolerance, and reconciliation as feminine strategies for nation-building. It links women's roles as life-givers and caregivers to the healing of the environment and society[17]. In literature, it reflects in *Yellow-Yellow* by Kaine Agary and *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga, where women's nurturing roles resist both patriarchy and ecological degradation.

3. Stiwanism (Social Transformation Including Women in Africa): The key proponent is Molara Ogundipe-Leslie. The focus seeks social transformation through the inclusion of women in African development processes. It moves beyond mere gender equality to restructuring power relations in politics, economy, and culture. It advocates for social transformation including women; recognizes the importance of mothers as agents of change within patriarchal structures. It recognizes that patriarchy, neo-colonialism, and poverty intersect in oppressing African women[18]. In literature, it

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

is seen in feminist characters striving for education and political awareness like Tambu in *Nervous Conditions*. c. Stiwanism (Molara Ogundipe-Leslie)

4. Negofeminism (Negotiative Feminism): The key proponent is Obioma Nnaemeka. It focuses on description of African feminism as negotiation and complementarity rather than confrontation. It emphasizes dialogue, respect for cultural norms, and compromise in achieving gender justice. It argues that African women use strategic negotiation within patriarchal systems to gain agency. In literature, it is evident in women characters who subtly resist oppression without direct rebellion, maintaining balance within family and community structures[19].

5. Ecofeminism / Eco-motherism (African variant): The key proponents are Wangari Maathai, and others in eco-critical feminist thought. The focus is to connect women's oppression with environmental exploitation. It argues that African women's closeness to nature makes them key agents of ecological restoration. It promotes sustainable living, environmental justice, and maternal care for the earth[1]. In literature, it is expressed in *Female Fear Factory* (Pumla Gqola) and *Woman at Point Zero* (Nawal El Saadawi), where the female body and the environment both symbolize resistance to exploitation.

6. African Womanism: The key proponent is Clenora Hudson-Weems. It focuses on Broader Pan-African perspective linking the struggles of African women and men against racial oppression. It emphasizes self-definition, family-centeredness, and cultural heritage. It rejects the individualism of Western feminism and promotes collective survival and progress[20]. In literature, it is found in texts highlighting African women as cultural preservers and agents of unity within postcolonial societies.

7. African Feminism (Mainstream): The key proponents are: Filomina Steady, Ama Ata Aidoo, Buchi Emecheta. It advocates gender justice grounded in African contexts and values. It recognizes women's economic and political roles alongside cultural identity. It seeks to decolonize feminism,

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

adapting it to African realities rather than imitating Western models[21]. In literature, it is found in works like *The Joys of Motherhood* by Buchi Emecheta and *Changes* by Ama Ata Aidoo.

2.2. Synthesis of Eco-Motherist Perspectives

1). **Women's Role in societal sustainability:** Women, as depicted in these selected literary works, are often central to the preservation and sustainability of their environments, both physically and metaphorically. Their interconnection to nature is portrayed as a source of strength and resistance against systemic forces, making them key figures in eco-motherism discussions.

2). **Interconnectedness of Women's Lives and the Environment**: All the novels explore the relationships between women's experiences, nature, and sustainability, expatiating on the interconnectedness of these themes.

3). **Patriarchal Oppression and Environmental Degradation**: The novels critique patriarchal systems and their impact on both women and the environment, explaining the ways in which these systems perpetuate oppression and degradation.

6). **Women's Agency and Resistance**: The novels feature female characters who resist and challenge the oppressive systems through their resilience and seek to control their lives and the natural environment.

7). **Settings:** The selected writers situate their stories in African contexts, where colonialism, patriarchy, and environmental exploitation intersect. Eco-modernism provides a valuable framework to explore these dynamics, especially how African women's experiences with nature contribute to the broader discourse on sustainability and equity.

By examining these selected literary works through an eco-motherism lens, the title underscores the dual focus on women's experiences and environmental sustainability in literature, emphasizing the transformative potential of African female voices in advocating for justice and balance.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

2.2.3. Interconnectedness of Women and Nature

Women and nature are naturally bonded because they are both life givers. This is the reason the earth is referred to as "Mother Earth" [22, 23]. The inquiries about affinity between women and nature initiated the emergence of Ecofeminism. From the traditional African society, women are regarded as subordinate to men and they accepted it as African societal structure. Therefore, many African women accept patriarchy and even enforce it on their female children, without questioning the legitimacy of their actions. Women have important roles to play in the society, right from the pre-history time till date. Biologically, women were created as the sole being that can procreate. They take up the key role of domestic and household keeper, nurturer and assistant in the family structures in the society. They consociate efforts with men to foster economic productivity, therefore, their relevance start from their families to the society.

African culture seems to be greatly influenced by the idea of the supremacy of the fathers. African culture is a stereotypic male-centric society, who sees men as the only sex that can have more economic impact upon the society. Patriarchy is one of the strongest ideologies in cultures and these ideologies have a great impact on the gender structure of the societies. Thus, patriarchy is a set of social relations between men, which have a material base and create interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women.

> Our society is a patriarchy. The fact is evident if one
> Recalls that the military, industry, technology, universities,
> Political offices, finances- in short, every avenue of power
> Within the society, including the coercive force of the police,
> Is entirely in male hands[25].

Culturally, women found themselves to be subordinate of men. Society had made them to be dependent on the men because society is male centered, and Traditional African culture exhorts men highly above the women. Hence, patriarchy is believed to have started from the home. In Africa, culture is the way of life. It is the foundation of gender inequality and there is need to be

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

revamped to be inclusive of women, because, culture structures society. Culture is our identity. It shapens the society and it is the foundation of patriarchy. In African society, it has been an accepted cultural norm that women are second fiddle and that there are certain fields, positions and roles that are seen as natural and such positions should be occupied by males. It has been an inherited cultural fact that women are seen as subordinates to men.

So, hierarchically, women were to fill particular places that were assigned to them in the society because of their gender. They experienced a lot of negativity by their denial of equal access to societal issues. They were not permitted to take up any occupational activities which is considered to be for men, except agricultural activities. Therefore, they were fully involved in the family work, i.e, agricultural activities: cultivating, planting, harvesting and selling of farm produce and in the production of various food items and commodities. For example, Women engaged in food processing, pottery making, mat weaving and cooking. Fish drying was done in the coastal areas of Calabar, Oron and Niger Delta., Women in Okposi, Yala and Uburu were known for salt production. In the South Eastern part of Nigeria, Pottery making and weaving was popular among the Afikpo women and their contributions help the sustenance of their families. These explain the enterprising nature of African Women and their economic importance to the development of the society[26].

Women through their economic efforts bring increase to the society. As women began to have a great insight into the plight of the women, they saw the need to advocate for better feminine rights.

> Visible sources of gender discrimination, such as gendered
> Job markets and inequitable wage scales and with getting women
> Into positions of authority in the professions, government
> And cultural institution[27].

Women were also aware of this marginalization, but accepted it as a natural order, being a patriarchal society. Notwithstanding, they have also been economically active in the society. There has been some women that had great outstanding achievements societally. In Nigeria for example,

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Tinubu Efunsetan, Funmilayo Ransome Kuti, Onyeka Onwenu, Oby Ezekwensilu, through them, Nigeria, had achieved great economic breakthrough.They have transited from the margin to the center and had contributed to social change in the patriarchal paradigm. Through education, they were able to stand up to show case their innate ability and intellectual wit. This is what the ecofeminist stand up to enforce. Women should have equal rights with the male. They shouldn't be denied to assert their rights to right the wrongs in the society and contribute immensely towards the societal development[28]. Therefore, women arouse and formed groups to fight against marginalization, subjugation and inequality.

2.2.4. Women and Nature's Contributions to Environmental Sustainability

The concept of environment covers the whole ecology, living and non living things and also human beings. Its impact on both living and non living things varies, especially, the socialization pattern varies from men to women, according to gender, social roles and societal responsibility patterns. The human being is in constant interrelation with his environment, especially, in Traditional African society. Women are considered as the primary user of natural resources in the rural area. They collect food, fuel, fodder, water and medicinal herbs from nature. They are involved directly and indirectly with farming, which involve pre planting, planting and post planting (harvesting process). Women take care of the family domestic animals and have practical knowledge about their conservation. Women are addressed as the fuel manager and friend of the forest as they collect vegetables and fruits and thus make a regular relationship with the forest because they have direct connection with the natural environment.

Traditionally, women have been stewards of the land, particularly in rural areas where they are often responsible for farming, gardening, and preserving natural resources. Their deep connection to the land and environment has led to the development of sustainable practices that help protect biodiversity[29]. The rural and indigenous women, play a vital role in the management of natural resources because they have great knowledge of soil, water, forest and energy due to their regular engagement. Additionally, women often play crucial roles in resource management and

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

agriculture, making them particularly vulnerable to climate change impacts like droughts or extreme weather events Women are the managers and conservers of natural resources, and have always ensure the protection of the fragile ecosystems, surviving natural disasters and organizing natural resources in a sustainable manner, because they derive a lot of benefits from nature. All these culminate to a strong bond between women and nature. The oppression of women and oppression of nature are interconnected. That is why there have been a parallel treatment given by the Western patriarchal society. Reason being that, the traditional role of both women and nature are akin to each other[30]. Women's role are to meet the basic needs and desires of men. Traditionally, women were not considered to be independent, except in relation to a man, whether father, brother, husband, or son. Also, non-human nature has provided independent resources to meet human needs for food.

Women are considered as the "Daily Managers of the Living Environment"[31]. Women are mostly involved in the activities relating to the conservation of environment along with their traditional household activities, they are interested in such activities because they obtain substantial benefits as food security, income, health care and above all in maintaining a sustainable and balanced ecosystem. The perspective in which the women viewed the environment is quite different from the angle in which the men viewed nature. The women see it from the economic angle, while the men activities brought destruction of nature, which led to inhumane treatment. The inhumane treatment of the environment could be dated back to the influence of the colonial masters, due to their covetous activities, which resulted into environmental injustice and economic marginalization of the people.

The relationship between the environment and its inhabitants are considered from a gender perspective. There is an interconnectedness of issues concerning African female's rights with environmental discourses. African women have been affected by the environmental degradation occuring in their society, where majority of the lands that are fertile for agriculture have been employed in planting only cash crops like tea for the Tea Industry[32]. The result is an increase in

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

the use of pesticide, diminution of resources and the removal of farmers who engage in subsistence farming, especially women, to the hillside and less fertile land, an area where deforestation and overgrazing have resulted in soil erosion. The soil erosion has aggravated the environmental degradation that hurts and reduces the people's own productivity and output.

Of recent, the concern for ecology and the threat that the continuous misuse of our environment poses on humanity has caught the attention of the writers. There are so many factors, which culminate to environmental injustice. An example is deforestation, which is a major problem in Nigeria, because there are no sustained initiatives, aimed at replacing trees on engeadering punitive tree conservation law to curb the excesses of tree felling in Tropical zones in Nigeria.

Likewise the women of Niger-Delta region of Nigeria, who have been ecologically affected because the flora and fauna have become destroyed to satisfy human profit and craving. Over-commercialization of the land and other natural resources for income has often times led to the displacement of indigenous/farmers, especially, women, from their land, rendering them economically handicapped. Hence, the exploitation of their lands, caused collosal problems of sociocultural and economic difficulties emanating from oil pollution because of constant spills of oils, gas flare and fire blow out[33-36]. They belief in the consciousness of life interconnections as a continuum within a space interconnection, that is sustained by earth and women. Therefore, Urhobo women belief in close relationship with the water goddess that there is maternal affinity between women and the river spirit[37]. This is possible because, the care women give to children is similar to the care found between the river spirits and the people.

Niger Delta women revered earth as the sustenance of creation, among other things and see women as earth in human form. The destinies of women and earth have been linked together in the religious space of indigenous African worship and culture. They referred to Earth's environment as a mother that nobody could kill or dig into her body for gold or mutilating her[38]. This shows the closeness to the earth and the sharing of motherhood with women and other female beings[39,40]

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Addressing environmental challenges requires considering gender-specific impacts and empowering women to participate in decision-making processes and sustainable solutions. As the environment serves as source of great advantage to them, it also have the negative sides. Today we live in a world of tropical warmth, chronic drought, desertification, deforestation, acidifying of oceans, frequent coastal inundation, tsunami, cyclones, increasing food and shelter shortage. It is a global phenomenon. Therefore, in order to live a healthy environment and have a meaningful existence, irrespective of gender, tribe, religion or race, the care of the environment must be of paramount importance.

Therefore, the despoliation, exploitation and pollution of the land also affect the women. An injustice to one, is an injustice to the other. The Impact of the environment on women transcend various aspects of their lives, ranging from health, economic opportunities, safety, and social roles. Women are often disproportionately affected by environmental issues like limited access to resources, unequal power dynamics, and traditional gender roles. For example, women in developing countries may bear the brunt of environmental degradation, facing increased health risks from polluted water sources or indoor air pollution from cooking with solid fuels.

2.2.5. African Female Writers

The literature of Africa started from the orature and evolved over time from oral stories and Egyptian hieroglyphs or writings, which dates back to the time of Arabic poetry, which spread during the Arab conquest of Egypt in the Seventh Century C.E. It also spread during ninth century in Western Africa. During slavery, millions of African people had learnt the language of their masters likewise the art of writing. It is the colonial masters' exposure to writings, that brought the art of literary works, like novels, poems, and plays of today, which help with the passing on of history of Africa and the literary traditions of each region.

There were some writers that started writing before colonialism, during colonialism and after colonialism. Most of the literary works were written around 1950s. Noteworthy examples are:

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe, the novel depicts the influx of British colonization into the Ibo culture in Nigeria. In response to British invasion and Apartheid in South Africa, Alan Paton wrote *Cry, the Beloved Countr*y (1948) and *Too Late the Phalarope.*

There can be no history of Africa, without the conscious effort of the early writers, who brought about, African Fiction. African fiction refers to literature written by authors of African descent, typically focusing on themes, settings, and characters rooted in Africa. It encompasses a diverse range of genres, styles, and voices, reflecting the rich cultural, social, and historical complexities of the African continent. African fiction often explores issues such as colonialism, post-colonialism, identity, cultural traditions, political upheaval, and everyday life experiences. Examples include works by Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, and many others.

Africa experiences, span through decades of hardships in her history which left an impact on the themes of its literature.The major themes in Nigerian literary works and how they affect people and society are varied and vast, these include reincarnation, pre colonial, anti-colonialism, condemnation of the colonizers, colonial, neo- colonial reality, African pride, displacement, art, religion, urban-life, tradition and culture, apartheid, ironies of life, religion, tradition, gender, feminism, marriage, love, morality, after-life (Mortality) and politics among others[40]. This literary trends continues, until of late, when writer started writing about current issues in the different geographical locations of Africa. Part of the germane issues is on women and environment. This is necessary, in order to understand the complete development of the literary trend.

After colonialism, some women, who were also opportuned to have Western Education, created interest in writing, majorly, to correct the erroneous view of the men who portrays women as inferior to men and also, they have the desire to introduce a feminine perspective to the socio-political vision of Africa as portrayed by male writers and to focus on issues relating to female subjectivity in order to expose the cultural impediments to the female agency. It was later that the African women came to limelight in the literary world due to cultural restraint and colonial education systems that kept women behind in attending mission schools. Now, there have been

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

quite numbers of African women, who are contribuing immensely to the National and international development of African societies through their literary wits.

The first African Anglophone female writer is Flora Nwapa with her novel, *Efuru*. Also is Zaynab Alkali, in her book *Still Born*, Buchi Emecheta's *The Joy of Motherhood*. The themes of these African female writers include: gender inequality, female circumcision, their rightful position and role as both mother and daughter in the marriage institution and the societal, cultural and traditional expectations of the women in the society.

There have been a quite number of African women who are contributing immensely to the National and International development of African societies through their literary wits. It was later that the African women came to limelight in the literary world due to cultural restraint and colonial education systems that kept women behind in attending mission schools.

Women were denied of education, personal development, preparation for adulthood and effective contribution to the future well being of their family and society. Women were forced into marriages and non-consensual sexual intimacy of women and young girls is still prevalent. Violence against women is any act of gender based violence that results in, or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, in clouding threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occuring in public or in private life[41]. Of recent, domestic violence against women is hugely a social context in African and is based on the patriarchal nature of our society, where violence against a wife is seen as a tool that a husband uses to chastise her, so that she improves her way. Larger percentage of women who suffers domestic violence in their matrimonial homes are on the increase, and reported cases of husbands killing their wives and other worst forms of violence, like beating, battering, trafficking, rape and homicide.

African women had been against gender discrimination and social injustice as far back as 19th century, for example, Queen Amina of Zazzau, a famous ruler of Zazzau Kingdom in Northern Nigeria, around 1576. Also, on the forefront of the feminist movement is Mary Ekpo and

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Funmilayo Ransome Kuti and Chimamanda Adichie. They advocated political and social inequalities faced by women in Nigeria. The pioneer protest for enforcement of women's rights in Nigeria was in 1929, in Aba, Eastern part of Nigeria[42]. There are quite enormous inequality and unfair treatment meted out to women in Africa and in Nigeria ranging from disadvantage at birth to discrimination at work place, social gathering, during voting. In the Northern part of Nigeria, women are objectified and are bethroted to men at tender ages of about 10[43].

Some Female writers tried to protest against these various forms of violence by reawakened the consciousness of African Women through their pens. Women have been able to revealed, reawakened and restructured their thinking. Women rewrite the history or situation of the women in a phallic society and empowered them to rediscover their innate /naturally endowed abilities and resources[44]. The female writers encouraged women to stop being passive and should not be relegated to the lower rung of the societal ladder. Women should see themselves as equal partners in the society, in order to foster greater development.The female writers have consciously encouraged the women and create in them self awareness of their great relevance to the society and how they can explore the opportunities which were naturally bestowed unto them by nature[45]. These female writers were able to do this through passing of information and instruction using their literary works.

Among the feminine writers are Tsitsi Dangarembga, Nawaal El Saadawi, Buchi Emecheta, Zulu Sofola, Flora Nwapa, Chimamanda Adichie, Julie Okoh, Mariama Ba and Mabel Segun, just to mention few. The coming on board of literary works of the contemporary female writers, include themes like oppression, suppression and liberated woman[46]. There are notable contemporary talented African female writers, who have enriched the literary landscape with their diverse perspectives and powerful storytelling, with themes ranging from: oppression, depression, subjugation, marginalisation, brutalisation, ostracisation, circumcision and discrimination of women[47].

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

There are writers in the African society which include: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, a Nigerian, known for novels such as *Purple Hibiscus, Half of a Yellow Sun,* and *Americanah*, she explores themes of feminism, identity, and post-colonialism in her work. Buchi Emecheta, also a Nigerian, explains the experiences of African women in her works like: *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Second-Class Citizen,* which depict the struggles of women in Nigerian society. It also address the issues of gender, race, and colonialism. Tsitsi Dangarembga, a Zimbabwean, also contribute her literary wit, which gave her international recognition in her novels, N*ervous Conditions,* which explores the experiences of women in post-colonial Zimbabwe[48].

Mariama Bâ, a Senegalese writer, gives a vivid description of the experience of women in the patriarchal society. Her novel, *So Long a Letter* is a poignant portrayal of the challenges faced by women in traditional Senegalese society, addressing themes of polygamy, education, and female solidarity. Ama Ata Aidoo, a Ghanian, expresses issues of feminism in her literary works such as *Our Sister Killjoy and Changes: A Love Story,* it explores themes of feminism, post-colonialism, and the clash between tradition and modernity in African societies. In addition to the female writers is Yvonne Vera, a Zimbabwean's literary works which include: Nehanda and Butterfly Burning. This addresses issues of colonialism, gender inequality, and the resilience of the human spirit in Zimbabwe[49].

Efua Sutherland, a Ghanaian, who was a writer, playwright and children's author also have works to her credence, which include: *The Marriage of Anansewa* and *The Voice in the Forest*, it brought to the fore, the Ghanaian folklore and explore themes of tradition and change. African francophone female writers like Aminata Sow Fall, Mariama Ba and Calixthe Beyala stormed the literary scene; their mission was to counter the poor image of women painted by male writers. They made women and women preoccupations the subject of literary investigations[50].

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

2.2.5.1. Reflection of Eco-motherism in the Selected Texts:

***Yellow Yellow* by Kaine Agary**

Agary's Yellow Yellow reflects eco-motherism through the interconnectedness of womanhood, nature, and survival. The protagonist Zilayefa's journey parallels the polluted Niger Delta environment both represent sources of life and fertility struggling for restoration. Agary foregrounds women's instinctive capacity for renewal, compassion, and environmental stewardship. The narrative celebrates maternal consciousness as a bridge between ecological preservation and human wellbeing. Through the mother-figure and Zilayefa's introspection, the novel advocates environmental responsibility grounded in empathy, care, and regeneration which is the key tenets of eco-motherism.

***Female Fear Factory* by Pumla Dineo Gqola**

In Gqola's Female Fear Factory, eco-motherism emerges as a philosophy of healing and social ecology. Although the book addresses gendered violence, its deeper thrust is toward collective healing and the re-cultivation of humane environments. Gqola calls for an ethical re-ordering of society in which nurturing values such as listening, protection, emotional safety should replace aggression and fear. Her idea of freedom as a practice resonates with eco-motherist principles that see mothers and women as natural architects of peace and balance, capable of restoring the moral ecology of communities.

***The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas**

Andreas's novel is perhaps the most direct fictional expression of eco-motherism. It locates womanhood at the center of communal and environmental regeneration. Through the friendship of Mee Ali and Kauna, the story depicts care, cooperation, and interdependence as forces that sustain both the social and natural worlds. The rural setting, rich in imagery of planting, harvest, and rain, symbolizes feminine nurturing as ecological equilibrium. Eco-motherism in this novel

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

represents not abstract philosophy but lived practice of women tilling, birthing, feeding, healing, and maintaining the delicate harmony between human life and nature.

***Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga**

Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions illustrates eco-motherism through Tambu's awakening to self and soil. Her longing to grow maize in her home village contrasts the sterile modern education that alienates her from land and kinship networks. The maternal figure of Ma'Shingayi embodies resilience and the ecological wisdom of subsistence living. Dangarembga crafts an eco-motherist vision that honors women as preservers of cultural and environmental continuity thereby suggesting that true liberation must harmonize intellectual growth with ecological rootedness.

***Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi**

El Saadawi's text articulates eco-motherism through spiritual and existential rebirth. Firdaus's narrative of self-realization parallels the earth's cycle of decay and renewal. Her awakening reflects an ecological consciousness that transcends victimhood to reclaiming inner fertility, moral clarity, and natural freedom. El Saadawi uses organic imagery of blood, water, soil, and cleansing, to depict woman as an elemental force of nature. Firdaus's final assertion of self becomes a ritual of purification, symbolizing the eco-motherist ideal of restoring life's natural order through truth and courage.

2.2.5.2. Historical Background of the Authors

In order to appreciate the contributions of African Female Writers on women and nature sustainability in African, from the ecofeminism and eco-motherism perspective, the historical background of the selected female writers will be discussed, so that the ideologies forming the bedrock for their literary works will be better understood.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Background Ideologies of the Writers

Yellow Yellow is written by Kaine Agary. She situates the novel in the Niger Delta region of Southern Nigeria, where there had been a debilitating effect of oil exploration on the land. The capitalist initiatives caused a colossal environmental degradation, that is of great magnitude on women's subsistent means of livelihood. She writes from the female perspectives about the women's issues and the children being fathered by expatriates, who they would never know or meet. . It causes unemployment and poverty, which further leads to vices like prostitution, armed robbery, abduction, restiveness, stealing and others.

Women at Point Zero is a novel written by Nawaal Elshadawi. She situates the novel in Egypt, a North Eastern country in Africa. Egypt is an Islamic country. There had been a notion of Islamic misogyny in the Middle East about a common misconception on the prevalence of sexual discrimination, which is believed to be a reason for women's second class citizenship. Women are situated in a binary, where they can attain their freedom in non-islamic nations as they are passive and oppressed victims of societal backwardness, which is an Orientalist stereotype drawing on the colonial view of Arab and Muslim women. She expresses the assertion of rights of her female protagonist by allowing her to voice out that, although she will die, but her rights/freedom must not be denied, for other females to learn from[51].

Nervous Conditions is written by a Zimbabwean novelist, Tsitsi Dangarembga. She is from Mukoto, Southern Rhodesia, in South Africa. She identifies women with voices and argues that women are able to reclaim their rightful position in the society. Her thematic preoccupation is womanhood and the female roles. Her women have strength, integrity, dutiful and conservative. She encourages the need to dream about and plan for a different, fairer world of happier men and women. She provides rich information on the new roles for modern African women.

Purple Violet of Oshaantu is written by Neshani Andreas a Namibian writer, being a teacher at a rural school in North Namibia, she was inspired from her experience in the rural village and hence,

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

explores status of women in the traditional Namibian society. She fits into a world around her that didn't make much sense to her in order to help express the experience of the women in the environment and how they were able to eke out a living for their families.

Female Fear Factory by Pulma Dinero Gqola. She is a South African author and gender activist. She drews inspiration for her novel Female Fear Factory from her own experiences and observations of the interconnectedness of gender-based violence and environmental degradation. Growing up in a society where women's bodies and the natural world were often exploited and commodified, Gqola Dineo sought to explore and challenge these dynamics through her writing.

2.2.6.2. Biography of the writers

Kaine Agary

Kaine Agary, she is the author of *Yellow Yellow*. She has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Sociology and Economics from Mount Holyoke College, USA and a Masters in Public Administration with a specialization in Public Policy from New York University's Wagner School of Public Service in the United States of America. So, she is a policy analyst, a research writer, a number/planning person. She grew up in Port Harcourt, Nigeria. She has lived in the United States of America and now lives in Lagos, Nigeria, where she is the Editor of TAKAii magazine. She won the NLNG prize for literature in 2008. She conceived and developed the art of writing as her response to the frustration she saw, after meeting many Nigerians who were ignorant of the current issues in the Niger-Delta and why there was a lot of agitation in the late 1990s. It was the knowledge based on media propaganda that most people, even Nigerians, believed, which aggravated the youth violence and portrayed everyone talking about the Niger-Delta as militants or rabble rousers. Simply because, majority of the people didn't understand deeply, their plight. This led to her carrying out a lot of research writing on women in Nigeria, particularly in the Niger Delta, area, for academic institutions and development organizations. Her initial goal was to write a short story,

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

which will revolve round the current happenings in Niger-Delta about germane issues concerning the survival of man in an environment that is degraded, exploited and abused.

The scholar points out that the novel, *Yellow Yellow*, captures the truama of the people of the Niger Delta by revealing the lives of those living in abject poverty in the midst of so much wealth and the devastating effects on the interconnectedness between women and nature. She got the inspiration for novel writing when she went on a journey to visit a friend on Bonny Island in Nigeria and it was her first time on the Island. When they were at the waterside in Port Harcourt, while waiting to get a boat to transport them to the Island, she saw a young man, hustling like every other young man at the waterside, but he was different. He was mixed Asian and this scene inspired , although, she later saw many Asians working as part of the Joint Venture with the Nigeria LNG in Bonny, coupled with some other factors that contributed to the story. She writes the story from the female perspective, using her feminine voice to discuss women issues which are rarely in contemplation, as against the voices coming out of the Niger-Delta which were male voices. The issue is about the children being fathered by expatriates who they would never know or meet as their father. In her concern, she thinks that in about 18 to 20 years from now, how will this generation of children integrate well and be received by the society. Many children who fall into this category of interracial children, wears their 'shame' in their skin colour and hair texture. Furthermore, the natural interconnection between women and nature is also another overiding theme in this novel. The effect of the oil exploration took toll on their major means of sustenance, thereby, affecting women and nature. Many natural habitations of the acquatic animals were destroyed. There was oil spoilage and this affect the health sector: some women had still birth, some died while giving birth and there are a lot of cases of neonatal death[52].

She decides to raise an alarm about women and the environment through the Eco-feminist perspective. This she creatively did through Zilayefs, a Greek-Nigerian girl, her protagonist, who against the odd of being born by an unwed mother, rises to affluence, but later falls as a result of moral misconduct. Wittily, she explains the interconnectedness between women and nature

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

through Zileyafa's mother and her community. This is because rural and indigenous women in subsistent economies depend on nature for survival, thereby highlighting the connection between women and nature towards humanity sustainability from the ecofeminism perspective.

Nawaal Elshadawi.

Nawal El Saadawi, the author of *Woman at Point Zero* was born at Kafr Ṭaḥlah, in Egypt in October 27, 1931, and died on March 21, 2021, at the age of 89, at Cairo. Her other names are Nawal Zeinab el Sayed. She formed her viewpoints at a very young age. Nawal was an Egyptian feminist writer, activist and physician. She was a feminist from a young age. She experienced various horrors firsthand, for example, genital mutilation, which made her to understand how women were oppressed in her culture. At the age of six, she underwent female genital mutilation, also known as female circumcision. During the circumcision, four women held her down while a midwife pulled out her clitoris and cut it off and according to her ''Since I was a child that deep wound left in my body has never healed,". As a child, she confided in her grandmother that she didn't have interest in getting married, and when she was around ten years of age, she ate raw aubergine, a fruit similar to eggplant, to discolor her teeth and sabotage an attempted arranged marriage. Her father encouraged her to have a formal education and at the age of thirteen, she wrote her first novel after developing a flair for writing and literature at a tender age. She equally wrote dozens of books, both fiction and non-fiction. She had Spouses: Ahmed Helmi, they got married in1955 and divorced in 1957 and she married Rashad Bey, but later divorced and later married Sherif Hatata in 1964 and divorced in 2010. She had 2 Children.

Nawal El Saadawi is known for being an ardent supporter of women's rights for most of her life. Her books were highly controversial in her native Egypt. She had many books to her honour, on the subject of women in Islam, and focuses on the practice of female genital mutilation in her society. She was referred to as "the Simone de Beauvoir of the Arab World" and as "Egypt's most radical woman". She was an Egyptian public health physician, psychiatrist, author, and advocate of women's rights. El Saadawi dedicated her feminist writings and professional career to political

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

and sexual rights for women. El Saadawi had her education at Cairo University, Columbia University in New York (M.P.H., 1966), and ʿAyn Shams University in Cairo. It is in this institution that she performed psychiatric research between 1972–74. In 1955–65 she worked as a physician at Cairo University and in the Egyptian ministry of health. In 1966 she was assigned the post of the director-general of the health education department within the ministry. In 1963, El Saadawi was appointed the Director of Public Health Education in Kafr Tahla, Egypt. She later studied and performed psychiatric research at Ayn Shams University in Cairo between 1972 and 1974. In 1972.

She founded Health magazine in 1968 which was close down by Egyptian authorities many years later. She was expelled from her professional position in the ministry of health in 1972 because of her book Al-Marʾah wa al-jins (1969; *Women and Sex)*, which was condemned by religious and political authorities. She carried out a research at ʿAyn Shams on Egyptian women suffering from neurosis. This case studies inspired her novel Amraʾah ʿind nuqṭah al-ṣifr (1975; *Woman at Point Zero)*. Her non-fiction book, Al-Wajh al-ʿarī lī al-marʾah al-ʿarabiyyah (1977; *The Hidden Face of Eve: Women in the Arab World*), made her work gained ground internationally for its focus on female genital cutting and commentary on the patriarchy of religious fundamentalism. In September 1981, El Sadawi was incarcerated and while in prison in the first two months, she wrote Mudhakkirāt fī sijn al-nisāʾ, in 1984; Memoirs from the Women's Prison on a roll of toilet paper using a smuggled cosmetic pencil to show how keenly she is interested in the issues concerning women.

El Saadawi founded the Arab Women's Solidarity Association (AWSA) in 1982 and co-founder of the Arab Association for Human Rights. She was awarded honorary degrees by three continents. She won the North–South Prize from the Council of Europe. She won the Inana International Prize in Belgium, in 2005 and the International Peace Bureau awarded her the 2012 Seán MacBride Peace Prize. She later on, became the editor of the organization's publication, Al-Nūn. In 1991 the government shut down Al-Nūn and then, couple of months later, AWSA was closed down. El Saadawi continued to face incessant legal challenges from political and religious opponents, this

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

include accusations of apostasy. An Islamist lawyer in 2002 made a legal attempt for her to forcibly divorce her from her husband, which wasn't possible. She won a case in May, 2008, that had been leveled against her by Al-Azhar University, the major centre of Islamic learning, that included charges of apostasy and heresy.

El Saadawi's novels, short stories, and non-fiction focuses on the status of Arab women, as in Mudhakkirāt ṭabībah (1960; Memoirs of a Woman Doctor), W*omen and Sex* (1969), Al-Khayt wa al-jidār (1972; *The Thread and the Wal*l), Al-Ḥubb fī zaman al-nafṭ , *Woman at Point Zero* (1975), *Woman at Point Zero* is a novel published In 1975. This story centers on a fictional character, Firdaus who finally agrees to narrate her life story before her execution for a murder case. It is based on El Saadawi's meeting with a female prisoner in Qanatir Prison. The novel discusses the subjugation of women, female circumcision, and women's freedom in a patriarchal society. Memoirs from the Women's Prison, published in 1986, tells of her 1981 imprisonment for ''crimes against the state.'' She documents the women's resistance to state violence and the formation of women's communities. (1993; *Love in the Kingdom of Oil*), and Al-Riwāyah (2004; The Novel). Her over riding theme is on the oppression of women by men through religion. The setting of her novel was in a mental institution, Jannāt wa Iblīs (1992; *Jannāt and Iblīs*). The female protagonists are Jannāt, whose name is the plural of the Arabic word for paradise, and Iblīs, whose name refers to the Devil.

Awards

El Saadawi received numerous honors and awards throughout her life for her works and activism. She received honorary doctorates from three universities. In 2011, she was named the 2011 Woman of the Year in the United Kingdom, in this same year, she equally won the Stig-Dagerman Prize, a prize awarded in Sweden to someone who ''promotes empathy and inter-cultural understanding.'' Nawaal Elshadawi 's literary wit in her novel, *Woman at Point Zero,* highlights the mutual relationship between women and nature metaphorically, to societal sustainability, viewing from the ecofeminism perspective.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Tsitsi Dagarembga

Tsitsi Dangarembga was born 4 February 1959, in the town of Mutoko, Zimbabwe (which was Rhodesia at the time). She moved to England as a young girl and received her elementary education there. She returned to Zimbabwe at the age of six and completed her education in a missionary school in Mutare, while there, she re-learned her native language, Shona. She went back to England to study medicine at Cambridge University in 1977. In 1980, Dangarembga returned to Rhodesia to study psychology at the University of Harare. Shortly thereafter, the country gained independence from the United Kingdom and became "Zimbabwe" under black-majority rule. While Dangarembga was a student, she worked as a copywriter for a marketing agency and also discovered her love of theater. So, she is a novelist, playwright and filmmaker. She wrote several plays that were put into production at the university. In 1983, her play "The Lost of the Soil" got the attention of Robert McLaren, and Dangarembga joined his theater group, Zambuko. She also wrote in 1987, a play "She Does Not Weep". Her first short story, *The Letter*, was published in Sweden in 1985. Her debut novel, *Nervous Conditions* (1988), was the first to be published in English by a Black woman from Zimbabwe. It came to limelight by the BBC in 2018 as one of the best 100 books that have reformed the world. She also had to her credit, play writing and screenplays, because she is a filmmaker, playwright, and the director of the Institute of Creative Arts for Progress in Africa Trust.

Dangarembga also studied film direction at the Deutsche Film und Fernseh Akademie in Berlin, where she engage herself in the production of different narrative and documentary films. In 1993, she wrote the story for the highest-grossing film in the history of her country, Zimbabwe, Neria. She founded the International Images Film Festival for Women in Zimbabwe. Her directorial debut, Everyone's Child, was the first feature-length film to be directed by a black Zimbabwean woman in 1996. In 2006, The Independent named her as one of the fifty greatest artists shaping the African Continent. The final chapter of the *Nervous Conditions* trilogy, entitled *Chronicle of an Indomitable Daughter*, was published in 2013. Despite her varied aesthetic interests and

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

successes, it is her novel that orchestrated her voice and her unique vision to the widest audience. Tsitsi Chiumya is an award-winning comedian and writer. She became a talent to be reckoned with. She lives and work in Harare, Zimbabwe, where she is the founding director of the Institute of Creative Arts for Progress in Africa (ICAPA) Trust. *Nervous Conditions* is her first novel, and was published in England in 1988, when she was only twenty-five years old. It was the first novel to be published in English by a black Zimbabwean woman and won the African Section of the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 1989.

Nervous Conditions is a partially autobiographical novel by Zimbabwean author Tsitsi Dangarembga that takes place in Rhodesia in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It focuses on the themes of race, class, and gender through the eyes of Tambu, the protagonist. The book, explores the the interconnectedness between women and nature for sustainability, from the ecofeminism perspective.

Neshani Andreas

The author of *Purple Violet of Oshaantu* is Neshani Andreas. She was a Namibian writer. She is also known as "Gallant Local Author was born in 1964. The place of her birth was in Walvis Bay, South-West Africa (now Namibia). She is the second of eight children. She has her first working experience was at a clothing factory. Both parents of hers were employees of a fish Factory . She worked as a teacher from 1988 to 1992, at a rural school in Northern Namibia. She is best known for her novel, T*he Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* which brought her to limelight and this made her to be the first Namibian to be included in Heinemann's African Writers Series.

In 2001, the novel was published when she was 37 years old. *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* which was an inspiration based on her experiences. The novel examines the status of women in traditional Namibian society. Andreas had a passion for writing and had long to be a writer from a young age. She had her education at the teachers' college in Ongwediva and taught there for a period of five years. Andreas furthered her study and obtained her degree in Bachelor of Arts and a post-graduate diploma in education at the University of Namibia. She rose to the post of Associate Director of

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

the American Peace Corps in Namibia for four years. It was there that she experienced " one of the most treasures moments in her life",[12], when she encountered the first person who encouraged her writing. Her work earned her international recognition, because her work was the first post-independence novels published. She explained that at the time, the writing culture was not fully entrenched in Namibia, her work was "lonely". Andreas was working as a programme officer for the Forum for African Women Educationalists when she died at the age of 46, after she was diagnosed with lung cancer at the early wake of 2010 . Her organisation seeks to educate women and girls and her flair for feminine course, prompted her to write the novel, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* , in order to explore the contributions of women and nature towards humanity sustainability in her country, from the ecofeminism perspective.

Pulma Gqola Dineo

Pumla Dineo Gqola, the author of *Female Fear Factory*, was born on 3rd December, 1972 and grew up in Alice in the Eastern Cape of South Africa. She is a South African academic, writer, and gender activist. She had her BA (Hons) from the University of Cape Town, an MA from the University of Warwick, and a DPhil in postcolonial studies from the Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich. She was employed at the University of the Free State from 1997 to 2005, and from 2007 to 2017 she worked at the University of the Witwatersrand, as an associate professor, and then became a full fledged professor, in literary, media and gender studies at the School of Literature and Language Studies. She was appointed Dean of Research at the University of Fort Hare in 2018. She was appointed to the post of Department of Higher Education Ministerial Task Team responsible for advising on gender-based violence in South African Universities in 2019. She was also Chief Research Specialist at the Human Sciences Research Council. She is best known for her book *Rape: A South African Nightmare*, which was published in 2015, and won the 2016 Alan Paton Award. She is a professor of literature at Nelson Mandela University, where she holds the South African Research Chair in African Feminist Imaginations. She was appointed as one of the patron of Etisalat Prize for Literature (alongside Billy Kahora, Dele Olojede, Ellah

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Wakatama, Kole Omotoso and Margaret Busby), which was launched in 2013 to celebrate the epoch making of African writers of published books of fiction.

She worked with the Centre for Women and Gender Studies at Nelson Mandela University, in May, 2020, as a professor in literature, majoring in African and postcolonial literature, African feminism, and slave memory. She had an award at National Research Foundation Research Chair in African Feminist Imaginations, in late 2020, which was dedicated to interdisciplinary gender scholarship. Her articles for public audiences have appeared in publications including the New Frame and the New York Times.

Professor Pumla Dineo Gqola won Brittle Paper Academic of the Year, her contributions to African literary culture. She has authored five books to her credit, these include , the landmark. What is Slavery to me? Postcolonial/Slave memory in post-apartheid South Africa' (2010), and the 2016 Alan Paton Award winning *Rape: A South African Nightmare* and *Female Fear Factory*. Pumla's coinage "the female fear factory" earned the 2023 Breakthrough Award in Humanities and Social Sciences by the Falling Walls Foundation in Berlin. *Female Fear Factory*: Gender and Patriarchy under Racial Capitalism was published in 2022 by Cassava Republic press. It focuses on exposing the insidious ways in which patriarchal systems subject women to violence and other forms of indignities. This incredibly powerful book tackles the challenges women face as they navigate patriarchal culture, which is rooted in violence. Her writing is truthful in its exposure of the kind of experience women face. Her works include expansive collection of books, journal articles, and essays that present insightful and unflinching examination of culture, politics, and history. Gqola also makes use of social media to add credence to African literary culture and feminist issues. This she does creatively in her novel, *Female Fear Factory*, to discuss the issue of female gender, that if the women were given equal rights with the male, they are good agents of change with nature that can foster humanity sustainability.

Outside the academy, she is an incredible public intellectual, role model, mentor, and social ally. She was once a chairperson in the Board of Trustees of the African feminist strategic litigation

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

firm, Women's Legal Centre, and had been a chairperson of the Board of the country campaign, a feminist non-profit organization. Also, she served on the boards of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) Press and the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSVR). Her perseverance in speaking out and advocating for dismantling patriarchal and its ideological hold on culture and politics is a testament to her influence in African feminist scholarship.

2.2.7. African Environmental History in Relation to Women and Nature Sustainability: A Review of the Selected Texts.

2.2.7.1 Historical Background of Women in Relation to Nature and Sustainability in Nigeria

The women of the Niger Delta in Nigeria have played important role historically in advocating for environmental sustainability and social justice. They have been at the forefront of grassroots movements, taking lead in raising awareness about the negative effects of oil exploration and exploitation on their communities, livelihoods, and the environment. The African women of the Niger-Delta region of Nigeria have been ecologically affected because the flora and fauna have become immensely destroyed to satisfy human profit and craving. Over-commercialization of the land and other natural resources for income has often times led to the dislocation of indigenes/farmers especially women, from their land, rendering them economically handicapped[53].

Inspite the challenges, violence, harassment, arrests, and intimidation, these women have continued in their efforts to safe guard their communities and encourage environmental justice. Their activism has promoted international awareness about the environmental and social issues in the Niger Delta and inspired similar movements around the world. Taking a look at the late 20th century, when some women organized protests and demonstrations against multinational oil corporations and the Nigerian government, describing explicitly, the pollution, deforestation, and other ecological damage caused by oil spills and gas flaring in the region[54]. There was a notable group known as the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP), which was led by the environmental activist Ken Saro-Wiwa. He was executed by the Nigerian government in 1995.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

These women emphasized the interconnectedness of women, nature, and sustainability, pointing that environmental degradation disproportionately affects women who takes their means of survival on natural resources for their livelihoods, for instance, farming, fishing, and gathering firewood[55]. They have advocated for sustainable development initiatives that takes the well-being of both people and the environment as of great importance, advocating for alternative sources of income and renewable energy solutions.

Historical Background of Women in Relation to Nature and Sustainability in Egypt

The history of Egypt will also be interesting to analyse from the perspective of the women particularly relating it to Interconnectedness with nature and sustainability[56] hence, it is a multifaceted topic that cuts across several millennia. Egypt, which is an Agricultural society and country, encouraged the Women in ancient Egypt to play great and important roles in agriculture, which was the bedrock of their country's economy. They were engaged in farming activities, managing household gardens and economy and tending livestock. This contributed in matters relating to religion, the women were religious, hence, belief in the Islamic teachings. Islamic principles emphasized stewardship of the earth (khalifa), which is believed to influence sustainable practices. Women, play a good role in managing family resources, which is important in implementing these principles. Some women also hold the worship of their Goddesses, for example, Isis and Hathor as sacred and important. They were so connected to their goddesses, because they belief that there was great connection which were associated with them in terms of fertility, nature, and motherhood. Their worship of these goddesses, show the reverence for natural cycles and women's roles in maintaining these cycles. In Egypt, the Women were privileged to own and manage property, like agricultural land, which enabled them to participate in and influence sustainable farming practices. Agrarian Reforms was the Modern Period, during the 19th and early 20th centuries in Agriculture. The agrarian reforms and modernization influenced the traditional roles of Women, because they continued to develop great interest in agriculture,

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

although they experienced new challenges and opportunities because of changes in the economic conditions of the citizenry.

The 20th century ushered in great educational opportunities for women. Education led to greater awareness and involvement in environmental and sustainability issues. The Egyptian women of recent, have shown great interest in environmental activism. Some Organizations and initiatives have made the women to focus on issues like pollution, conservation, and sustainable development particularly in rural areas. They are involved in empowerment programmes, which promote organic farming, water conservation, and biodiversity. In policy-making and advocacy related to environmental sustainability, women were also involved. They established various NGOs and community organizations explain their contributions to promoting sustainable practices. One of the influential feminist and writer is Nawal El Saadawi. She advocated for women's rights and explicitly explain the interconnectedness of women's liberation and environmental sustainability. Another NGO, Women and Environment Organization (WEO)'s focus is on empowering women in other to participate in sustainable development and environmental conservation efforts in Egypt.

Some challenges experience by women, especially in the rural areas are the challenges of the climate. Their traditional knowledge and roles in natural resource management are highly important in adaptation and mitigation efforts. Although, the women are progressing, they still face legal and social barriers that limit their active participation in sustainability efforts. Addressing these barriers is very important for harnessing their potential in increasing environmental stewardship.

Conclusively, Egyptian women have historically played important roles in managing natural resources and promoting sustainable practices. Their contributions continue to evolve, motivated by education, advocacy, and greater involvement in environmental and policy-making spheres.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Historical Background of Women in Relation to Nature and Sustainability in Zimbabwe

During the Colonial Era (1890-1980), there was Marginalization of women under British colonial rule. The Zimbabwean women witnessed great marginalization. The influx of the colonial masters, brought with it Colonial policies that disrupted traditional structures, hence, it limits women's access to land because they were dispossessed of their land and economic resources (Buckingham 2020).

Inspite of all these challenges, women were active in resistance movements and political activity. An example is the liberation struggle (Chimurenga) which saw many women take on roles such as fighters, spies, and supporters for the nationalist movements. Figures like Nehanda Nyakasikana (Mbuya Nehanda) became symbols of the struggle for independence. There was also labor migration, which witnessed many men leaving their rural areas to work in mines and cities, women then faced increased responsibilities at home. However, colonial policies restricted women's movement and economic opportunities.

In Post-Independence (1980- till date). Zimbabwean women started to participate in politics and gain more visibility in politics and leadership. Although, the government made efforts to promote gender equality, but progress has been uneven. Also, there have been significant legal reforms purposed at improving women's rights, for example, laws addressing domestic violence, inheritance rights, and employment equity. There was also Economic Participation for women that have increasingly participated in the formal economy, though they still experience significant barriers, like access to finance, education, and markets.

There were some women who participated actively in the course of women emancipation, for example, Amai Sally Mugabe, the wife of the late President Robert Mugabe. She was a prominent figure advocating for women's rights and social welfare programs. There was also various women organizations, like the Zimbabwe Women's Resource Centre and Network (ZWRCN) and Women and Law in Southern Africa (WLSA), they have been instrumental in advancing women's rights and providing necessary support services. The advancement in technology caused a cultural shifts,

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

which made the role of women in Zimbabwean society continue to evolve, with increasing representation in arts, literature, business, and science.

Women have taken on Leadership roles as community leaders in many of their communities. Their societal responsibilities include managing communal resources and leading initiatives for environmental conservation. Been active members in the society, they formed cooperatives and community-based organizations whose focus is on sustainable development. Of recent, Zimbabwean women initiated modern movements, which have greatly increased their participation in environmental movements and NGOs focused on sustainability. They also involve themselves in projects aimed at combating deforestation, promoting renewable energy, and encouraging policies that protect natural resources.

There is a notable development in the Health and Educational sector. There have been improvements in prompt access to health care and education for women, though disparities remain, especially in rural areas. There is still Gender-based violence and discrimination which remains a significant issues, with increasing efforts by NGOs and the government to solving these problems. Women are developing more interest in politics and economic empowerment with more women holding parliamentary seats and leading businesses.

Therefore, the history of women in Zimbabwe reflects a journey of how they overcome adversity and strive for equality, with increasing efforts to address the socio-economic and political challenges that persist between Zimbabwean women and the natural environment, underscoring their contributions to sustainability and environmental stewardship.

Historical Background of Women in Relation to Nature and Sustainability in Namibia

The history of Namibia cannot be comprehensive enough without narrating from the angle of the Namibian women in relation to nature and sustainability which is deeply intertwined with their roles in traditional societies, colonial impacts, and modern environmental movements. Their Pre-colonial and Traditional roles cannot be over emphasized because it is deeply rooted in the

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

indigenous knowledge systems. Namibian women since time immemorial, have been custodians of their indigenous knowledge systems[57]. They have an extensive understanding of local flora and fauna, traditional medicine, and sustainable agricultural practices. This knowledge was essential for the survival and well-being of their communities. Women were primarily responsible for subsistence farming, with agricultural activities like planting, weeding, and harvesting crops i.e. provision of food security. Their intimate knowledge and understanding of the land and weather patterns enable them to manage resources sustainably and maximally. It is the responsibility of the women to collect water, which sometimes, is from distant sources. This task explains the need for a deep understanding of the local environment and sustainable water use practices.

During the Colonial Period, there was disruption of traditional lifestyle due to German and later South African administration. There was displacement of many communities, which led to the denial of access to natural resources and this disproportionately affected women. Their men were forced into labour by the colonial policies leading to increased responsibilities for the women in rural areas, while their men were in the urban, working for their colonial masters. Despite these challenges, the women maintained good traditional practices and maximised the natural resources as best as they could.

The Post-independence and Modern Era ushered in Environmental Advocacy for Namibian women who have become greatly involved in environmental advocacy and in Education, which play critical roles in community sustainable practices and conservation. The women have been taking a lead in the initiative of Community-Based Natural Resource Management (CBNRM). They were also involved in conservancies that promote sustainable use of wildlife and some other natural resources, making sure that those benefits are shared within the community and also promote economic opportunities in eco-tourism by providing economic opportunities. Through lodges, guide tours, and produce handicrafts that reflect their cultural heritage and connection to nature. Agricultural innovations is not left out, women take lead by adopting and promoting sustainable farming techniques that can enhance food security and resilience against climate

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

change. In terms of adaptation to climatic change, women make frantic efforts that focus on climate change adaptation in their country. Therefore, they have projects that address scarcity of water, soil erosion, and many other environmental challenges that may be caused by climate change.

Despite their contributions, women are still facing great challenges, like gender inequality, limited access to land and resources, and were not opportuned to be represented sufficiently in decision-making processes. Some women had taken it upon themselves to develop and to empower women through education, training, and capacity-building programs in order to develop their leadership skills and make sure they play a vital role in sustainable development.

Therefore, the Namibian government and some NGOs encourages policies and programs that promote gender equality and women's involvement in environmental sustainability. In a nutshell, Namibian women's interactions with nature and sustainability is a testament to their resilience, knowledge, and indispensable role in preserving their environment for future generations.

Historical Background of Women in Relation to Nature and Sustainability in South Africa

In order to make the history of South African rich, South African women significant efforts should be explored in relation to nature and sustainability, which is a rich and complex tapestry. It shows the intersection of gender, culture, and environmental stewardship. Beginning from the Pre-Colonial and Indigenous Era, there were Indigenous Knowledge Systems being practiced by Indigenous communities in South Africa, like the Khoisan and various Bantu-speaking peoples. They have historically practiced sustainable use of natural resources. The Women played important roles in gathering plants, managing water sources, and sustaining agricultural practices that were in harmony with the environment[58]. In terms of Medicinal Knowledge, women were often custodians of medicinal plant knowledge, which was of great importance to both healthcare and ecological balance.

The colonial era brought significant disruption to traditional lifestyles. European colonization led to the displacement of indigenous communities, and the introduction of new agricultural practices

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

often degraded the environment. Women's roles in traditional ecological management were undermined[59]. The establishment of mining and agricultural industries led to the migration of men from rural areas to urban areas, leaving women to manage households and small-scale farming, most of the time, with limited resources and increasing environmental stress. Women bore the brunt of these policies as primary caregivers and food producers[60]. During the Resistance Movements, Women also participated actively in anti-apartheid movements, and their activism often included environmental justice. Groups such as the Black Sash and the Federation of South African Women (FSAW) highlighted the relationship between social justice and environmental issues. In the post-apartheid era, South African women have shown great interest in environmental activism.

Some Organizations such as Earthlife Africa and the South African Women in Environment (SAWE) have been instrumental in advocating sustainable development and environmental justice. Also, Women have been involved in community-based conservation initiatives, like managing community gardens, water conservation projects, and eco-tourism ventures that promote biodiversity and sustainability. Moreover, South African women have also taken leadership roles within environmental policy and governance. Notable people include Buyelwa Sonjica, who served as Minister of Environmental Affairs and Tourism, and Kumi Naidoo, who, although male, took a leading role in Greenpeace and worked closely with female activists in the region. The roles of women can not be over emphasized, because they continue to be the pivotal point in agricultural sustainability, engaging in permaculture, organic farming, and other practices that promote soil health and biodiversity.

In terms of climatic change, South African women are at the front lines of climate change impacts, for instance, in rural areas where they are responsible for water and food security. Adaptation strategies often leverage traditional knowledge and community solidarity. There was also the organization of Economic Empowerment, which is aimed at ensuring that women have access to

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

resources, education, and economic opportunities which is crucial for advancing sustainability goals. Programs that encourage women entrepreneurs in green industries are also organized.

In conclusion, South African women have a long history of Interconnectedness with nature and sustainability that is shaped by cultural traditions, colonial disruptions, and ongoing social and environmental challenges. Their contributions are important to the country's efforts in advocating ecological balance and sustainable development

2.1.7. Synopsis of the texts

Yellow Yellow by Kaine Agary

Agary's novel, *Yellow Yellow* is a powerful literary embodiment of eco-motherist principles. The exploitation of the Niger Delta (the "motherland") is directly paralleled with the exploitation and suffering of its women. It is a coming-of-age novel, first published by Dtalkshop in Lagos (2006). The novel follows Zilayefa (called “Yellow-Yellow”), a mixed-heritage girl raised by her single mother, Bibi, in a Niger Delta village of Bodo to a white oil worker father (who abandons the family) and an Ijaw mother. Her name, meaning "yellow yellow," is a local reference to her light skin, a constant reminder of her mixed parentage and the source of her otherness. The novel traces Zilayefa's life from her childhood in the idyllic, resource-rich creeks to her move to the chaotic and polluted city of Port Harcourt for education. After finishing secondary school she moves to Port Harcourt seeking education, freedom and economic opportunity. Her personal journey of self-discovery and search for identity is inextricably linked to the environmental and social degradation of her homeland. She witnesses firsthand the destruction wrought by the oil industry: gas flaring, oil spills that poison farmland and waterways, and the decline of traditional fishing and farming. The narrative explores the resulting social ills—poverty, community conflicts, the rise of militant groups, and the disillusionment of the youth. Zilayefa's story is a microcosm of the Niger Delta's struggle, culminating in her personal trauma and her ultimate decision to return to her community, armed with education and a renewed sense of purpose.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

The city exposes her to sexual exploitation, transactional relationships, and political/corporate violence. The novel interweaves Zilayefa's intimate coming-of-age trajectory with the larger social and ecological crises of the Niger Delta of oil spills, gas flaring, corruption, and the collapse of traditional livelihoods which shows how environmental degradation reshapes family life, gender roles and moral economies.

The Land in the novel, is seen as Mother and Nurturer. Initially, the Niger Delta is presented as a life-giving mother. Zilayefa's childhood memories are filled with the bounty of the land and sea: clean rivers for fishing and swimming, fertile soil for farming, and lush forests. This reflects the eco-motherist view of nature as a benevolent, sustaining force and gas mothering chain. The community lives in a symbiotic relationship with this "mother," respecting her cycles and drawing life from her.

The Violation of the Land, (Mother) represents ecological rape. The arrival and dominance of the oil industry are depicted as a violent assault on this mother figure. The imagery is potent and deliberately invasive:

i. Oil Spills: Described as black poison choking the rivers and farmlands, making them barren. This directly violates the land's ability to nurture and provide.

ii. Gas Flaring: The constant, fiery illumination of the sky is portrayed as a violent, unnatural fever in the body of the land, polluting the air and causing acid rain.

iii. Pipelines: These are often described as metallic snakes or scars crisscrossing the land, a physical violation of the earth's body.

This ecological rape mirrors the colonial and neo-colonial exploitation of the region, where natural resources are extracted with no regard for the health and well-being of the land or its people.

Mothering in the novel is also emotional and mnemonic: Bibi's stories, rituals and attempts to maintain moral order are eroded by persistent ecological catastrophe. Eco-motherism reads these

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

losses as double: the loss of livelihood and the loss of intergenerational cultural transmission. The novel's elegiac moments are the scenes that mourn the ruined river, the poisoned farms, and the decline of village ritual which are best read as maternal mourning, ecology and memory loss for both kin and environment.

Agary does not only depict passivity. The novel gestures to forms of resistance that are rooted in maternal and communal care: local solidarity networks, women's conversations, and small acts that attempt to protect children and preserve memory. From an eco-motherist perspective these are politically potent because they reframe care as environmental activism that is grassroots refusal of extractive logics. Scholarly ecocritical readings of *Yellow-Yellow* discuss precisely how the novel ties women's experiences to Niger Delta activism.

Women are the first and most profound victims which the novel meticulously illustrates how the violation of the land translates directly into the suffering of women, fulfilling the core tenet of eco-motherism like:

i. Increased Labour: As the rivers are polluted, women like Zilayefa's grandmother and other female relatives must travel farther and work harder to fetch clean water and find fish. Their domestic and nurturing labour becomes a desperate struggle.

ii. Economic Disempowerment: With farming and fishing destroyed, the traditional economic activities managed by women are decimated, pushing them deeper into poverty and dependence.

iii. Bodily and Spiritual Harm: The pollution leads to health issues like respiratory problems and skin diseases, which disproportionately affect women and children. The destruction of the environment also severs their connection to a spiritual and cultural heritage rooted in the land.

Zilayefa is the Eco-motherist Protagonist. Her personal journey is an allegory for the violated land and female bodies as contested ecological sites. Zilayefa's body is raced, gendered, and economically valued in the marketplace of Port Harcourt; her sexuality becomes a resource substituted for the lost ecological resources at home. Eco-motherism highlights this displacement:

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

when land and water no longer yield, women's reproductive and sexual labour are monetized. The novel thus stages a brutal economy in which environmental plunder produces gendered commodification. Critics have noted Agary's linking of sexual exploitation with oil-driven dispossession.

Moreover, her Body is taken as a Battleground because of her mixed-race identity ("yellow yellow") makes her body a site of colonial legacy and exploitation. Her light skin is both a curse (marking her as different) and a symbol of the forced, unnatural union between the local (the motherland) and the foreign (the exploiter). Her eventual rape is the ultimate parallel to the rape of the land. It is a violent, traumatic violation that shatters her innocence, just as oil exploration shatters the Delta's ecology.

Through Zilayefa's story, Agary explains the struggles faced by women and marginalized communities in the Niger Delta and how despite the exploitation, they were able to sustain humanity alongside the nature. Kaine Agary employs an eco-moderism perspective to highlight the interconnectedness of women's experiences and the natural environment in the Niger Delta.

***Woman at Point Zero* by Nawaal Elshadawi**

Woman at Point Zero is a novel by Nawal El Saadawi, published in 1975. The novel is a powerful and thought-provoking one that offers a unique perspective on the experiences of women in Egypt. Eco-modernism frames this as the end-point of a system that treats bodies as disposable objects.The novel is set in Egypt with the literary wit of El Saadawi, that presents a vivid storytelling and unflinching portrayal of the harsh realities faced by women which makes this novel a classic of feminist literature. *Woman at Point Zero* is a powerful and harrowing novel that tells the story of Firdaus, a woman condemned to death in an Egyptian prison. The novel is written from the third person narrative eye, a psychiatrist who interviews Firdaus, uncovers her life story and the events that led to her imprisonment for murder. The story centered on El Saadawi's own experiences as a doctor and feminist activist in Egypt.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

The novel centres on the story of Firdaus, a woman who has been imprisoned for killing her pimp. Through a series of flashbacks, a visitor (a doctor/journalist) interviews Firdaus and transcribes her life story. Firdaus recounts her life story, Firdaus recounts a childhood of poverty and abuse, early sexual violation and betrayal by family and male guardians, a brief experience of schooling, a forced and violent marriage, escape to the city, and a sequence of exploitative relationships and labor (including sex work) in which she discovers both the brutality and the limited autonomy possible inside a patriarchal modern society. She momentarily attains economic independence and personal dignity, but a final betrayal leads her to kill a pimp and be imprisoned. Throughout, Firdaus articulates lucid insights about power, freedom, and the costs exacted by modern institutions and markets upon women's bodies and lives. From her childhood in a rural village to her experiences as a prostitute in Cairo. Firdaus was born into poverty, so, she starts her life as a pauper. Her story is one of struggle, resistance, and survival. She endures abuse from her family and later from her husband, whom she is forced to marry at a young age. Her experiences with oppressive men and societal structures leave her disillusioned and desperate for freedom. She escapes her abusive marriage and turns to prostitution, initially as a means of survival. Over time, Firdaus gains a sense of power and autonomy by controlling her relationships with men through her profession, prostitution.

The Key eco-modernist readings of this novel centres on urbanization and ecological alienation. The city as ecological void explores Firdaus's movement from rural/household spaces into the city and mirrors a symbolic shift from embodied, relational life to a commodified, mechanized social ecology. The urban modern setting of workplaces, offices, brothels, courts, prisons all functions as a system that severs human ties to organic rhythms and mutual care, producing isolation and instrumental relationships. Medical clinics, legal systems, schools, and prisons in the novel operate like parts of a technocratic ecology: they regulate bodies, standardize behaviors, and discipline life through protocols that reproduce social hierarchies rather than sustain human flourishing.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Moreover, Nature metaphors and sensory imagery are used by El Saadawi often like light, heat, deserts, animals, bodily sensations, to register Firdaus's interior life. These images work against the dry, dehumanizing language of institutions; nature metaphors become resources for resistance, memory, and a language of dignity.

Despite her success and independence as a sex worker, Firdaus realizes that society continues to exploit and oppress women, regardless of their societal status. Her growing defiance of societal norms results in her killing a man who attempts to exploit her, leading to her imprisonment. Through Firdaus's story, Nawal El Saadawi lampoons the patriarchal and oppressive structures that marginalize women in both personal and societal contexts. The novel is a searing indictment of gender inequality, systemic injustice, and the harsh realities faced by women in a male-dominated world. *Woman at Point Zero* is celebrated for its unflinching portrayal of resilience and defiance in the face of oppression. It remains a landmark work in feminist literature and a call to action against gender-based injustice.

Firdaus's journey towards reclaiming her autonomy can be seen as a metaphor for the need to reclaim and protect natural resources. Her resistance against patriarchal structures can inspire a similar resistance against environmental degradation. Firdaus's resilience and ultimate resistance against her oppressors reflect the broader need for sustainable practices that protect and empower rather than exploit. Her defiance serves as a call for justice and equity, essential components of sustainable development. Firdaus speech with a female Doctor in Qanatir prison gives a detailed information about her circumstances as she unfolds her life before the doctor and this the doctor did after she had died, to give her life in ink on paper

Nervous Condition by Tsitsi Dagarembga

Nervous Conditions by Tsitsi Dangarembga is a semi-autobiographical novel published in 1988. It is the first book in her acclaimed trilogy, followed by *The Book of Not* and *This Mournable Body*. The setting of the novel is in Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) in the 1960s and 1970s, at the time the country is struggling for independence from British colonial rule. The novel is a powerful coming-

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

of-age novel that explores themes of gender, colonialism, and identity in post-colonial Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). The story is narrated from the narrative eye of Tambudzai (Tambu) Sigauke, a young Shona girl from a poor rural family. Tambu's life is characterized by poverty, patriarchal traditions, and the complexities of colonialism. Her father, Jeremiah, is a subsistence farmer who struggles to provide for his family, while her mother, Mainini, is a hardworking woman who bears the brunt of domestic responsibilities. Tambu is determined to excel above the limitations imposed on her by poverty and societal expectations.

Tambu's journey is one of growth and awakening, as she grapples with the compromises and sacrifices required to achieve her ambitions. The novel ultimately critiques the societal and colonial structures that perpetuate inequality and limit the potential of individuals, particularly women.

The novel begins with the death of Tambu's brother, Nhamo, which affords her an opportunity to take his place at a missionary school co-funded by her uncle Babamukuru, a well-educated and influential figure in the family. Tambu is thrilled by the chance to pursue her education, which she views as a pathway to independence and success and her life takes a dramatic turn after her admission into the mission school, where she can receive a Western education. She relocates to live with Babamukuru's family, and begins to see the complexities of privilege, patriarchy, and the effects of colonialism. Tambu's experiences at the mission school expose her to the contradictions of colonialism, as she journeys the complexities of cultural identity, language, and social hierarchy. She observes the struggles of her cousin Nyasha, who battles with her own identity and the oppressive expectations placed upon women in both traditional and westernized contexts. Nyasha's rebellion and eventual mental breakdown serve as a grave warning about the psychological toll of journeying these conflicting world.

Moreover, the novel shows how education can both be a tool of colonialism and a means of empowerment for women. The novel mirrors the deep connection between women and the land in African cultures. This connection is often portrayed through the daily lives of the characters,

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

especially the women who are involved in farming and other subsistence activities. The rural setting of the novel underscores the dependence on natural resources for survival, emphasizing a sustainable way of life that is closely tied to the environment. The rural setting of Tambu's homestead underscores the importance of land and agriculture. The family's subsistence farming lifestyle is deeply connected to the natural environment.

Also, women in the novel are depicted as the primary caretakers of the household and the land. Their knowledge of agriculture, food production, and resource management is crucial for the sustainability of their families and communities. Examples are characters like Tambu and her mother who illustrate how women are central to maintaining the household and ensuring food security, highlighting the indispensable role of women in sustainable practices. The novel touches on the importance of cultural sustainability. The preservation of indigenous knowledge, traditions, and practices is portrayed as essential for the survival of the community. Characters like Tambu's grandmother embody the transmission of cultural knowledge, emphasizing the role of women in sustaining cultural heritage.

Conclusively, women in the novel demonstrate resilience in the face of environmental and social challenges in various forms through education, mental health struggles, and maintaining traditional practices. This resilience is equalled in the sustainable practices tied to the land. Their ability to adapt to changing circumstances highlights the theme of survival and endurance. They demonstrate resilience in the face of environmental and social challenges. Tambudazi was determined, that no matter what, she will be educated[61].

The Purple Violet of Oshaantu by Neshani Andreas

The Purple Violet of Oshaantu by Neshani Andreas is a compelling novel that explores the lives of women in rural Namibia, focusing on themes of friendship, gender inequality, and the struggles of navigating societal expectations. The novel is a poignant exploration of resilience, solidarity, and the enduring strength of women in the face of systemic challenges. The novel is published in

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

2001 and the setting is in the 1960s in the small village of Oshaantu, known now as Namibia, during the country's struggle for independence from South African apartheid rule. It is celebrated for its authentic portrayal of rural African life and its focus on the bonds of female friendship as a source of empowerment.

Symbolically, the title *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* refers to the purple violet flowers that grow in the village, symbolizing hope, resilience, and the beauty of rural life. That is the resilience of the women through their interconnectedness with nature, sustainance of humanity. Through Mee Ali's story, Andreas explores the title "ecofeminism perspective of women and nature sustainability". This is highlight in Women's Empowerment like Mee Ali's experiences that illustrate the challenges faced by women in patriarchal societies, as well as their potential for empowerment through education and self-determination. Mee Ali is a kind and reflective woman, who gives a detailed information about her life in the village of Oshaantu. At the centre of the novel is Mee Ali's deep friendship with Mee Kauna, a woman in the web of an abusive and oppressive marriage of her husband, Shange. Mee Ali serves as a source of support and solace for Mee Kauna, as she endures physical and emotional abuse from Shange.

The novel is deeply rooted in patriarchal culture through Mee Kauna's experiences, the novel satirises the patriarchal structures that perpetuate gender-based violence, limit women's agency. explores the oppressive structures of traditional Namibian culture, particularly around marriage, widowhood, female autonomy, and community solidarity. Through flashbacks and third-person recollections, Mee Ali narrates Kauna's journey to widowhood, her refusal to conform to mourning rituals, and her eventual displacement from the village and home. It also sheds light on the community dynamics in rural Namibia, where gossip, tradition, and societal expectations often shape individuals' lives. The climax of the story happens with Shange's sudden death, which exposes the true nature of his relationships and sparks controversy over Mee Kauna's role in his demise. This event forces Mee Kauna to face her past and decide on her future, while Mee Ali reflects on her own relatively peaceful marriage and the choices that define a woman's life. Mee

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Ali is a strong-willed and independent young woman who returns to her village after completing her education. Mee Ali is determined to make a difference in her community, but she faces numerous challenges, including poverty, lack of infrastructure, and the restrictive traditions of her village.

Women in the novel, despite facing marginalization and environmental degradation, demonstrate resilience and resistance. They challenge traditional gender roles and advocate for environmental conservation, emphasizing the interconnectedness of gender justice and environmental sustainability. Neshani Andreas in her novel intricately emboiders themes of empowerment and resilience within the framework of women's lives and their connection to nature and sustainability. She explores how women reclaim their agency in the face of oppressive structures. Through acts of defiance, self-determination, and advocacy, they assert their rights to land, autonomy, and a healthy environment. This theme aligns with ecofeminist ideals of empowerment and liberation. This she does through the protagonist, Kauna, in her efforts to maintain her farm and sustain her family despite her husband's abuse and neglect illustrate a form of empowerment. The land and agricultural activities provide a means for women to gain economic independence and control over their lives. This aligns with the broader theme of women leveraging natural resources to secure a stable livelihood.

Moreover, the novel explores the interconnectedness of women and nature, which shows that the sustainability of one is linked to the sustainability of the other. The novel often depicts women's close relationship with the land and nature. Through the character of Kauna, who is deeply connected to her rural environment, the story highlights women's roles as caretakers of the earth and their reliance on natural resources for sustenance and livelihood. It also reflects on how women's lives are closely linked to their natural environment. Sustainable practices and a deep understanding of their land's rhythms are depicted as integral to their existence. The characters embody environmental stewardship, recognizing the importance of maintaining the health of their natural surroundings to ensure long-term sustainability and also by engaging in practices that

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

protect and nurture the environment. The women demonstrate their role as stewards of the land by the relationship that exists between the women and their environment which is symbiotic. The women depend on the land for sustenance, and in turn, they practice sustainable farming methods that help preserve the environment. The women's deep understanding of the land and their sustainable farming practices highlight a harmonious relationship with nature[62].

***Female Fear Factory* by Pumla Dineo Gqola**

Female Fear Factory by Pumla Dineo Gqola is a powerful feminist work that builds on the ideas introduced in her earlier book, *Rape: A South African Nightmare*. *Female Fear Factory* is a collection of short stories by Pumla Dineo Gqola, published in 2020. The book explores how patriarchal structures, racial capitalism, and historical violence shape women's experiences of fear and vulnerability. The book is a powerful exploration of the experiences of women and non-binary individuals in South Africa, delving into themes of fear, violence, trauma, and resilience.

In *Female Fear Factory,* Gqola highlights how fear is systematically used to control and police women's behaviour, not only in South Africa but across the globe. The "fear factory" refers to the mechanisms through which patriarchal societies create, maintain, and enforce this fear to sustain gender inequality, particularly in post-apartheid South Africa. .

Through critical analysis, Gqola explores various forms of violence, both physical and psychological, that perpetuate this fear. She explores into the ways societal structures, institutions, and cultural norms collude to normalize the control of women and their bodies. She also highlights how women's fear is not only entrenched in direct violence but also in the constant threat of harm, which inhibits their freedom and agency.

Female Fear Factory explores the intersections of gender, race, class, and geography, explaining how these factors amplify the experiences of fear and violence for marginalized women. Gqola challenges readers to dismantle these systems by imagining and working toward a world where women can live without fear. The novel examines themes related to women, nature, and

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

sustainability, often intertwining them to depict the interconnectedness between women's roles, environmental preservation, and societal harmony. It explores the complex relationship between women and nature by highlighting the importance of recognizing and addressing gender disparities in environmental conservation efforts. These themes might include the exploitation of natural resources, ecofeminism (the connection between the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature), the resilience of women in the face of environmental challenges, and the need for gender-inclusive approaches to sustainability. It explores how women navigate and resist environmental threats while highlighting the importance of their voices in shaping sustainable solutions. The author celebrates women's resistance movements and resilience in the face of environmental degradation and gender-based violence, highlighting the importance of collective action and solidarity[63].

Overview on Characters and Characterization

The discussion of character and characterization is in tandem with the eco-motherism perspective that is, focusing on how maternal, feminine and ecological consciousness connect in the novel and align with the broader theme of eco-motherism in selected works of female African writers.

1). *Yellow-Yellow* by Kaine Agary

By analyzing the characters in Yellow-Yellow from an eco-motherism lens, we can see how the novel explores the interconnectedness of women's lives and the natural environment, and how it challenges the dominant systems that perpetuate oppression and degradation.

Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* (2006) explores the life of Zilayefa, a young biracial woman from the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, navigating issues of identity, womanhood, and environmental degradation. Through vivid characterization and symbolic settings, Agary captures the intersections of female identity, ecological destruction, and maternal absence/presence — themes that resonate deeply within the eco-motherism framework.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Eco-motherism emphasizes the nurturing bond between women and the environment, viewing women's maternal instincts as extensions of care toward the earth and society. In Yellow-Yellow, Agary's characters embody this ideology through their lived experiences within a degraded environment, symbolizing the "wounded mother-earth" and the "neglected daughter-nature."

Zilayefa (Yellow-Yellow): She symbolises the Search for Nurture and Identity. She is often called Yellow-Yellow because of her mixed race. She is both the protagonist and narrative voice of the novel. Her biracial identity becomes a metaphor for displacement; cultural, ecological, and maternal. She grows up in a Niger Delta community ravaged by oil pollution, where both the land and its women suffer exploitation and abandonment.

From an eco-motherist lens, Zilayefa represents the child of a wounded environment. Her yearning for identity mirrors the people's yearning for ecological healing. As she moves from her rural home to the city, her journey signifies both a physical and emotional detachment from the nurturing earth and traditional motherhood — leading to moral and psychological vulnerability.

Agary's portrayal of Zilayefa as innocent yet corrupted by societal and environmental toxicity reflects the loss of natural purity — a recurring ecofeminist motif. Her disconnection from her roots and motherland parallels humanity's alienation from nature.

a). Sisi and Lolo: They represent Maternal Figures and Eco-Motherist Anchors. They are the two urban women who take Zilayefa under their care, serve as symbolic eco-mothers who is guiding her through the chaotic urban environment. Though not biological mothers to Zilayefa, they embody maternal care, wisdom, and resilience, qualities associated with eco-motherist ethics.

Sisi provides material and moral support, representing urban adaptation and survival, while Lolo emphasizes dignity and inner strength. Together, they symbolize how maternal compassion extends beyond biology which aligning with eco-motherism's view that "mothering" can include nurturing society and sustaining life in all forms.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Through them, Agary presents an alternative model of motherhood that is rooted in mentorship and communal care, echoing African ecofeminist ideals that link women's nurturing roles to ecological and social well-being.

b). Binaebi (Zilayefa's Mother): She represents "The Earth-Mother Symbol". Zilayefa's mother, is often referred to simply as "Bibi", is a quintessential representation of the "Mother-Earth figure". She is a hardworking woman who depends on the polluted environment for survival through farming and fishing in oil-contaminated waters. She embodies the archetype of a rural mother whose subsistence and identity are tied to the land and sea. As oil pollution degrades soil and fisheries, Bibi's capacity to provide and protect is undermined — not only economically but morally and symbolically. This transforms mothering from a stable, place-based practice into a fragile, migratory strategy (sending Zilayefa to the city).

Mama's resilience and suffering mirror the Niger Delta's ecological crisis, where the land is both life-giving and exploited. From an eco-motherist perspective, Binaebi's labor and endurance embody the dual role of motherhood which is nurturing despite devastation. Her inability to protect Zilayefa from moral corruption parallels her powerlessness to protect the environment from oil companies, showing the shared vulnerability of both woman and nature under patriarchal and capitalist systems.

Agary's characterization of Mama thus elevates her beyond a personal figure to a symbolic "eco-mother" — the human face of environmental endurance.

c). Admiral: He is a representation of Masculinity and Ecological Domination. Admiral, the wealthy older man who seduces Zilayefa, personifies the patriarchal and exploitative forces that mirror multinational oil companies' relationship with the Niger Delta. His actions represent male-centered domination which is both over the female body and the natural environment.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Through Admiral, Agary critiques the colonial and capitalist masculinities that exploit women and nature alike. The relationship between Admiral and Zilayefa parallels the relationship between the oil elites and the Delta's resources — extraction, pleasure, and abandonment.

In this light, eco-motherism contrasts with Admiral's worldview: while his masculinity thrives on control and consumption, eco-motherism advocates care, regeneration, and coexistence.

d). The Niger Delta Setting as a Character: Agary uses the Niger Delta not merely as a backdrop but as a living character, embodying the wounded mother-earth. The land's degradation of oil spills, dead fish, polluted water, mirrors the emotional and moral decay of the people.

From the eco-motherist perspective, the environment assumes maternal symbolism, which is nurturing, yet suffering, bountiful yet abused. Agary's anthropomorphism of the land draws attention to environmental injustice and the urgent need for restoration, aligning with eco-motherism's call for a renewed ethic of care and balance.

e). Narrative Technique and Symbolism: Agary employs first-person narration to immerse readers in Zilayefa's emotional and ecological consciousness. Her tone of innocence and confusion evokes empathy, allowing readers to feel the moral decay of both society and environment.

Symbols such as oil pollution, migration, and water underscore the novel's eco-motherist subtext:

i). Oil spills symbolize corruption and moral contamination.

ii). Water represents both life and danger — a maternal yet endangered force.

iii)..Migration to the city signifies disconnection from the nurturing earth.

In Conclusion**,** through her nuanced characterization in Yellow-Yellow, Kaine Agary offers a powerful eco-motherist narrative that links the female experience with the ecological condition of the Niger Delta. Each character — from Mama's endurance to Zilayefa's loss of innocence which embodies the tensions between nurture and neglect, care and exploitation, humanity and nature.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Under the eco-motherism lens, Agary's work becomes more than a coming-of-age story; it becomes a call for reconnection with the mother-earth and restoration of feminine ethics of care in a world fractured by greed and ecological injustice. It highlights how the novel reflects themes of nurture, motherhood, female identity, and ecological renewal from an eco-motherist perspective.

Table 1.1 Eco-Motherist Viewpoints on Yellow-Yellow

Aspect	**Eco-Motherist Interpretation**	**Symbolic Meaning/Implication**
Setting (Niger Delta)	The land and waters are portrayed as a violated mother: fertile yet exploited by oil industries.	Symbolizes "Mother Earth" suffering from patriarchal and capitalist exploitation.
Zilayefa (Yellow-Yellow)	Represents the daughter disconnected from her mother and nature, seeking identity and belonging.	Symbolizes the lost bond between humanity and nature, and the need for reconnection and renewal.
Zilayefa's Mother	Embodies the nurturing, self-sacrificing mother figure tied to land, tradition, and moral strength.	Represents the eco-motherist ideal: woman as sustainer and healer of life.
Relationship between Mother and Daughter	Reflects the generational and ecological rupture caused by modernization and colonization.	Symbolizes the broken link between human beings and their nurturing environment.
Sisi and Mr. Browne	Agents of modernity who exploit Zilayefa emotionally and morally, mirroring environmental exploitation	Symbolize patriarchal domination over both women and nature.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Oil Companies / Environmental Destruction	The land's pollution parallels the abuse of female bodies and spirits in a patriarchal society.	Represents the interconnected suffering of women and nature under exploitation.
Motherhood and Nurture	Central to eco-motherism: emphasizes care, renewal, and emotional connection to the land.	Portrays motherhood as a moral and ecological force capable of restoration.
Fertility and Female Body Imagery	The female body is linked to the fertility and depletion of the land	Suggests that healing women and restoring nature are interdependent acts
Zilayefa's Growth and Self-awareness	Her eventual self-realization hints at reconnection with her roots and natural identity.	Symbolizes ecological rebirth and social transformation through feminine awareness.
Author's Vision (Kaine Agary)	Advocates for women's voices as central to restoring ecological and moral harmony.	Promotes eco-motherism as a path toward healing both the earth and the feminine spirit.

This table above portrays women and nature in *Yellow-Yellow* as interconnected victims of exploitation yet powerful sources of renewal and healing. The novel suggests that reclaiming the maternal bond with the environment is essential for rebuilding both ecological and social harmony in postcolonial Africa.

2). *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga

In *Nervous Conditions,* Tsitsi Dangarembga analyze the characters and characterization of Ma'Shingayi, Nyasha, Tambu, Lucia, and Babamukuru, in tandem with Eco-modernism reading, through the lens of modernization, ecological consciousness, and social transformation, showing how maternal consciousness, nurture, and female/nature interconnectedness shape the novel's ecological and feminist dimensions.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

a). Ma'Shingayi (Tambu's Mother)

She stands as the embodiment of maternal endurance and the traditional African woman's intimate bond with the earth. Her daily life revolves around farming, nurturing, and preserving her family's survival in a patriarchal and economically deprived system.

From an eco-motherist lens, Ma'Shingayi represents the mother-earth archetype of a figure whose nurturing instincts reflect both the fertility and suffering of nature. Her toiling on the land and emotional burden parallel the exploitation of women and the environment. Yet, through her resilience, she symbolizes ecological and emotional regeneration, embodying the restorative power of the mother figure to sustain life despite systemic oppression. Her nurturing relationship with the soil positions her as a voice for eco-ethical balance, linking motherhood to environmental harmony.

b). Nyasha

She is the Western-educated daughter of Babamukuru, characterized by her intelligence, sensitivity, and defiance. Her psychological struggles stem from the conflict between her African identity and Western upbringing.

The Eco-motherist Interpretation explains Nyasha's fragmented self as mirrors of the wounds inflicted on both women and nature by colonialism and patriarchy. She lacks the nurturing balance that eco-motherism celebrates, illustrating the crisis that arises when cultural roots are severed. Her inability to find wholeness reflects an environment stripped of care and maternal grounding. Through Nyasha, Dangarembga critiques the emotional and ecological dislocation of modernization that rejects the nurturing principles of maternal and ecological interconnectedness. Nyasha's rebellion becomes a metaphor for nature's resistance against domination.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

c). Tambu (Tambudzai)

Tambu is the novel's narrator, a bright, determined young girl who seeks liberation through education. Her journey from rural poverty to missionary schooling symbolizes the quest for growth and self-definition.

The Eco-motherist Interpretation shows that Tambu embodies the eco-motherist principle of renewal and transformation. Her consciousness evolves from dependence to awareness, much like the rebirth of a landscape after drought. She symbolizes a bridge between tradition and modernity, combining intellectual growth with moral and ecological awareness. Tambu's nurturing instincts are not confined to childbearing but extended to cultural preservation and environmental empathy. Her story reflects eco-motherism's call for balanced progress rooted in care, renewal, and the restoration of harmony between human and natural worlds.

d). Lucia

Lucia is a bold, pragmatic, and fearless woman who refuses to be subjugated by male dominance or societal judgment. She embodies female agency and adaptability.

The Eco-motherist Interpretation is that Lucia personifies active maternal strength, not in the domestic sense but through her life-affirming courage and emotional nourishment of others. She represents the dynamic, protective, and regenerative aspects of motherhood that eco-motherism celebrates. Her defiance against patriarchal norms parallels the resilience of the environment that continues to thrive despite exploitation. Lucia thus becomes a symbol of female empowerment and ecological survival, showing that the nurturing principle is not weakness but power that is capable of sustaining and renewing both society and nature.

e). Babamukuru

He is the patriarch and educated head of the family, is portrayed as authoritative, disciplined, and deeply rooted in colonial Christian values. He embodies success and oppression in equal measure.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

From Eco-motherist standpoint, Babamukuru represents the patriarchal and anthropocentric mindset that disrupts the balance between humans and nature. His rigid control and suppression of women mirror humanity's domination of the natural world. Unlike the maternal figures, he lacks the capacity for nurture and renewal; instead, he perpetuates alienation and hierarchy. Eco-motherism critiques such masculinist authority, positioning Babamukuru as the antithesis of ecological and maternal care. His success, built on control, contrasts with the women's quiet yet transformative nurturing power.

Table 2.1. Tabular Summary of Eco-motherist Viewpoint

In *Nervous Conditions*, Tsitsi Dangarembga uses her characters to articulate the fusion of motherhood, ecology, and liberation:

Character	Eco-motherist Role	Symbolic Meaning
Ma'Shingayi	Earth Mother	Nurture, endurance, ecological balance
Nyasha	Disconnected Daughter	Loss of ecological and maternal harmony
Tambu	Reborn Daughter	Renewal, education with ecological consciousness
Lucia	Empowered Mother	Resistance, regeneration, survival
Babamukuru	Patriarchal Force	Disruption of natural and maternal balance

Together, these characters reveal how eco-motherism reclaims the maternal as a site of resistance and renewal, showing that healing the land and healing women are intertwined acts of liberation.

3). *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi

Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero* (1975) presents Firdaus, a woman imprisoned for murdering her abuser, as a symbol of female resistance and reclamation of autonomy. From an eco-motherist lens, Firdaus's life mirrors nature's cycle of oppression and renewal, underscoring the connection between womanhood, exploitation, and liberation.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Characters analysis from an eco-motherism perspective in *Woman at Point Zero* involves examining how the characters' experiences, relationships, and interactions mirror the interconnectedness of women's lives and the natural environment.

a). Firdaus: represents the struggles of women in a patriarchal society, where their bodies and reproductive rights are commodified. She is also an embodiment of eco-motherism concept of "woman-nature" connection, exemplifying the ways in which women's bodies and the natural environment are both exploited and marginalized. Her journey from oppression to empowerment illustrates the ecofeminist principle of resistance and activism.

Firdaus is the central figure, a woman who journeys from childhood abuse and systemic exploitation to a radical act of defiance. She is intelligent, reflective, and disillusioned by social hypocrisy. The Eco-motherism perspective views Firdaus as embodiment of the wounded earth which is exploited, commodified, and polluted by patriarchal control.

Her final act of killing her pimp and accepting death represents a cleansing fire, a symbolic act of ecological and moral purification. Though she bears no children, Firdaus manifests spiritual motherhood, that is, she gives birth to a new consciousness of resistance, truth, and self-worth. Her body and life stand for ecological reclamation — the reclaiming of agency over a desecrated environment.

El Saadawi's characterization of Firdaus transcends victimhood; she becomes a force of elemental power, embodying the earth's suppressed voice rising against domination. Like a polluted river reclaiming its course, Firdaus purges her oppressors by defying patriarchal control — her act of violence representing nature's revolt against continuous exploitation.

Her alienation from love and motherhood reflects the denial of her nurturing essence, while her final acceptance of death reclaims spiritual and moral purity, aligning her with the self-cleansing force of nature.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

b). Mariana: She symbolizes the complicity of women in their own oppression, highlighting the ways in which patriarchal systems can internalize and perpetuate oppression. She represents the tension between women's roles as caregivers and nurturers, and their own desires and aspirations. Her character illustrates the ecofeminist concept of "woman-identified" relationships, where women prioritize their connections with each other and the natural environment.

c). Sharifa: (the older prostitute / mentor figure).

She embodies the resilience and strength of women in the face of oppression and marginalization. She represents the importance of female solidarity and collective action in promoting sustainability and social justice. Her character highlights the eco-modernism principle of community and cooperation, emphasizing the need for women to work together to challenge dominant systems. Sharifa initially appears as a motherly protector who takes Firdaus under her wing, but she later becomes manipulative, exploiting Firdaus for her own gain. The eco-motherism perspective presents her as distorted motherhood when nurturing turned into exploitation, reflecting how systems of survival under patriarchy corrupt the natural nurturing instinct. She mirrors a degraded environment, one that once offered shelter but has become toxic due to systemic oppression. Her duality (protector and exploiter) critiques the social structures that force women to commodify care and sexuality as survival strategies.

d). The Prison Warden: She is the sympathetic guard. She treats Firdaus with a rare degree of compassion, recognizing her dignity despite her condemned status. The Eco-motherism perspective of her is the quiet empathy she has, which represents the human element of restoration, akin to the caretakers of damaged ecosystems. She bridges the divide between punishment and compassion, symbolizing the potential for regenerative justice, that is, a justice rooted in care rather than destruction. Through her, the novel shows that nurturing can emerge even within the harshest institutional systems.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

e). The Doctor: She is the unnamed narrator / Psychiatrist (Dr. Nawal El Saadawi). She interviews Firdaus in prison, and serves as a reflective listener and witness. She bridges the world of reason, medicine, and society with Firdaus's world of truth and experience. The Eco-motherism perspective she presents is that, she acts as a maternal listener, symbolizing empathy, understanding, and the transmission of women's stories which is essential to components of eco-motherist ethics. She symbolizes intellectual motherhood that is a woman nurturing truth and empathy. Together, the two women illustrate eco-motherism's principle that care and resistance are forms of regeneration, much like the earth renewing itself after destruction.

By documenting Firdaus's life, she becomes a custodian of memory and voice, helping regenerate a moral ecology where silenced truths can flourish. Her scientific role is transformed into spiritual midwifery that helps birth Firdaus's testimony to the world. She symbolizes the medicalization and control of women's bodies, highlighting the ways in which patriarchal systems can manipulate and exploit women's reproductive rights.

f). Bayoumi (the abusive husband-like figure)

Bayoumi pretends to care for Firdaus but traps her, rapes her, and denies her freedom. From Eco-motherism perspective, he represents the colonial-patriarchal force that imprisons and exploits both women and nature. His house is symbolic of confinement, a microcosm of human dominance over life and environment. His violence echoes ecological violence that is, the domination and violation of the natural world for selfish gain.

g). The Pimp: He commodifies Firdaus's body, turning her into an instrument of profit. He is the ultimate symbol of patriarchal capitalism and the devaluation of life. The eco-motherism perspective presents him as industrial exploitation, when he consumes, drains, and destroys vitality, just as extractive economies destroy the earth. Firdaus's act of killing him signifies a moment of ecological revolt, when the natural world reclaim itself from its abusers. This act

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

reasserts the eco-motherist ideal that destruction can sometimes be purification, that is, an ending that makes new growth possible.

h). The Society (Collective Character): This is the broader society in *Woman at Point Zero* She functions as a collective character that normalizes oppression, commodification, and silence. The eco-motherism perspective mirrors society as a polluted ecosystem which is full of decay, hypocrisy, and imbalance. Firdaus's rejection of this society is like a plant uprooting itself from contaminated soil, seeking spiritual regeneration elsewhere. The novel thus becomes a call for ecological and moral revolution, dismantling corrupt systems of domination.

In *Woman at Point Zero*, El Saadawi portrays motherhood as an ethical consciousness, not merely a biological function. Firdaus becomes an eco-mother of truth, birthing awareness through pain. The psychiatrist becomes the eco-mother of memory, preserving the narrative as an act of moral restoration. Even the prison warder's compassion is a seed of hope which is a proof that nurturing can survive in hostile environments.

Together, these characters construct an eco-motherist ecosystem where every act of care, truth, and resistance heals a fragment of the broken social and natural order.

Conclusively, El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero* aligns perfectly with eco-motherism's moral vision: that healing the wounds of women is inseparable from healing the wounds of the earth. Firdaus's final silence, defiance, and death are not endings but a symbolic return to the soil — to nature's cyclical logic of death, renewal, and rebirth. Her story teaches that liberation, like regeneration in nature, requires confrontation, truth, and cleansing.

Through stark and minimalist characterization, El Saadawi unites feminist and ecological metaphors: women's bodies as landscapes of struggle, and liberation as ecological rebirth. The novel thus transforms motherhood from biological reproduction into ethical reproduction that is, a rebirth of consciousness.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Thus, *Woman at Point Zero* becomes not only a feminist manifesto but also an ecological testament that affirms the sacred connection between womanhood, the earth, and the ethics of care.

Eco-motherist viewpoints on Woman at Point Zero by Nawal El Saadawi, shows how the novel reflects eco-motherist themes of female oppression, resistance, renewal, and ecological rebirth through the connection between womanhood and nature.

Table 3.1. Tabular form of Eco-Motherist Viewpoints on *Woman at Point Zero*

Aspect	**Eco-Motherist Interpretation**	**Symbolic Meaning/Implication**
Protagonist: Firdaus	Represents the oppressed yet resilient woman who seeks liberation from patriarchal and exploitative systems.	Symbolizes the abused earth—violated but capable of regeneration and resistance.
Motherhood and Nurture	Though denied motherhood biologically, Firdaus embodies spiritual motherhood through her awakening and courage.	Motherhood redefined as nurturing self-awareness and social justice, not only childbearing.
The Female Body	Firdaus's body is commodified and controlled, reflecting nature's exploitation under patriarchal systems.	The female body parallels the earth, which is fertile, used, and discarded, yet central to life's renewal.
Male Exploitation (Patriarchy)	Men represent destructive forces that dominate both women and the environment for selfish gain	Symbolizes how patriarchy devalues life-sustaining elements—women and nature alike.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Prostitution and Economic Oppression	Reflects the commodification of women's bodies similar to the exploitation of natural resources	Shows the moral and ecological decay caused by greed and domination.
Self-Awareness and Rebellion	Firdaus's awakening represents the reclaiming of inner power and ecological consciousness.	Symbolizes the rebirth of the feminine spirit and restoration of harmony with self and nature.
Violence and Resistance	Her act of killing her oppressor (Marzouk) becomes a metaphor for destroying the system that enslaves women and nature.	Symbol of eco-motherist resistance—renewal through liberation and moral awakening.
Prison and Death	Her imprisonment reflects confinement within patriarchal and exploitative structures. Her death represents transcendence and freedom.	Symbolizes purification and spiritual renewal—nature's cycle of death and rebirth.
Societal Corruption	The materialistic and hypocritical society mirrors the environmental decay of moral and natural values	Critiques the social systems that exploit both women and the environment.

Author's Vision (Nawal El Saadawi) Calls for the recognition of women as nurturers, healers, and moral centers of humanity. Advocates for eco-motherism—liberation and ecological balance through feminine wisdom and compassion.

In Summary, from an eco-motherist perspective, *Woman at Point Zero* redefines motherhood and womanhood as forces of ecological and moral renewal. Through Firdaus, Saadawi portrays how women's liberation is deeply tied to healing the wounds of exploitation that is both human and

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

environmental. The novel becomes a call for reconnection, regeneration, and resistance against systems that destroy life and nurture.

4). *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas

Eco-Motherism Perspective in Characters of *the Purple Violet of Oshaantu*

Neshani Andreas's *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* explores women's lives in a rural Namibian village through the intertwined experiences of Mee Ali, Kauna, and the broader female community. The novel highlights communal womanhood, resilience, and environmental interconnectedness, core principles of eco-motherism.

Through characterization, Andreas presents the village women as custodians of life and culture, mirroring eco-motherist ideals that connect female resilience with environmental and social healing. The village setting itself functions as a metaphorical mother in sustaining its inhabitants while reflecting their wounds.

Main Characters:

a). Mee Ali: She is the story narrator. She's a married mother living in the rural village of Oshaantu. Although her husband, Michael, works as a migrant miner and is frequently away, yet, she has a stable marriage. Mee Ali embodies compassion, wisdom, and steadfast friendship, especially toward her neighbor Kauna. She represents the struggles of women in a patriarchal society, where their bodies and reproductive rights are controlled. She is an embodiments of the connection between women's lives and the natural environment, exemplifying the ways in which women's experiences are shaped by their relationships with the land and natural resources. Her character illustrates the ecofeminist principle of "woman-nature" connection, where women's bodies and the natural environment are both exploited and marginalized. She represents women's solidarity and a healthy marriage.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

She is Kauna's loyal friend and represents the nurturing, communal mother who offers emotional support and empathy, which is essential qualities of eco-motherism. Her role demonstrates that motherhood and care extend beyond the biological to encompass social and ecological responsibility. The women's collective labour in the fields and their shared solidarity emphasize the interconnectedness between community, womanhood, and the environment.

b). Kauna: Kauna (also known as Meme Kauna). She is a young housewife and mother, trapped in a violent and abusive marriage with Shange. She symbolizes suffering, courage, resilience and resistance against patriarchy. Her experiences are central to the novel as she endures mistreatment and ultimately takes a courageous stand. She symbolizes the resilience and strength of women in the face of oppression and marginalization. She is a representation of the importance of traditional knowledge and practices in promoting sustainability and social justice. Her character highlights the ecofeminist principle of community and cooperation, emphasizing the need for women to work together to challenge dominant systems.

Kauna is central to the narrative as a woman who endures years of abuse in her marriage. Her suffering parallels the degraded moral and ecological landscape of her village. As an eco-motherist symbol, Kauna embodies silent endurance and regenerative strength, much like the earth that continues to sustain life despite exploitation. Her eventual act of defiance (refusing to mourn her abusive husband) represents a reclamation of her agency and dignity, echoing the earth's resistance to further violation.

c). Shange: He is Kauna's abusive husband very cruel and unfaithful. He is a miner whose sudden death at home launches the story's pivotal conflict. He represents toxic masculinity and oppression. He represents the anti-thesis of eco-motherism that is, a patriarchal and destructive force who disrupts both human and ecological harmony. His cruelty, infidelity, and domestic abuse parallel environmental exploitation and the neglect of care systems.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

The Eco-motherist interpretation of Shange exposes the imbalance created when masculine domination disregards nurturing ethics. His life and death reinforce the eco-motherist principle that exploitation, whether of women or land, leads to decay and disharmony.

Supporting Characters:

d). Michael: Mee Ali's husband. He is kind, loving, and supportive. His character provides a stark contrast to Shange and reinforces a positive model of marriage. He exemplifies respectful partnership and possibility of good marriage.

Michael, Mee Kauna's son, reveals the potential for male transformation within an eco-motherist framework. He demonstrates respect and emotional maturity, valuing Kauna's humanity and helping her heal from trauma. The Eco-motherist perspective in this character presents Shange as renewal of life which not by dominating but by nurturing. His character symbolizes the restorative power of harmony between genders, akin to the balanced relationship between humanity and nature. He exhibits empathy, care, and understanding toward his mother which is a rare quality among men in the novel's patriarchal setting.

Michael becomes a symbol of reconciliation that bridges the gap between the feminine ethic of care and masculine social responsibility. His character suggests that eco-motherism is not exclusive to women; it's an inclusive ecological consciousness open to all genders.

e). Mekwankala (sometimes written as Mukwankala): She is an elderly woman in the village who stands up to Shange for abusing Kauna. She represents solidarity and moral strength from within the community and community wisdom.

f). Mee Feenie (Kauna's aunt): She is a strong, independent figure who encourages Kauna to consider leaving her abusive marriage. She is strong and outspoken. She symbolises empowerment. She is one of the women who helps sustain the community's social fabric through gossip, storytelling, and mutual aid.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

The Eco-motherist interpretation of her role represents social ecology that is the networks of care and informal knowledge-sharing that sustain communal life. Even though she is not a biological mother in the center of the plot, her participation in collective women's circles demonstrates the nurturing, protective, and community-centered ethics central to eco-motherism.

g). Sustera: The local nurse who treats Kauna after she's beaten and helps her access contraception. She supports Kauna's physical and emotional healing. She also symbolizes care, education, medical support and modern knowledge.

h). Mee Maria: She is a deeply spiritual woman who provides emotional and sometimes moral guidance to others in the community. The Eco-motherist interpretation of her is that she represents spiritual eco-motherhood, embodying the moral conscience that reconnects humanity to ethical and environmental values. Her quiet wisdom and compassion echo the voice of nature which is restorative, gentle, and rooted in communal ethics rather than dominance.

i). The Sisters (Female Solidarity Group)

The sisterhood among women like; Mee Ali, Mee Kauna, Mee Fennie, Mee Maria, and others, collectively enact eco-motherism through emotional interdependence and reciprocal support. They care for each other, share food, stories, and comfort, and collectively resist patriarchal oppression. Their solidarity mirrors ecological interdependence in which each woman, like a plant in an ecosystem, contributes to the community's survival and regeneration.

The Eco-motherist insight of her character is that, Woman-to-woman bonds become an environmental metaphor for cooperation and regeneration in a harsh, exploitative system.

Across these characters, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* constructs a microcosm of eco-motherist ethics of the female community that symbolizes interconnectedness and mutual nourishment. Also, care, empathy, and renewal become the novel's central ecological principles which defines eco-motherism not merely as motherhood, but as a worldview rooted in respect for life, community, and balance. To show how the novel presents motherhood, community, and ecological renewal as

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

intertwined forces of female empowerment and environmental harmony, there is a tabular explanation below:

Table 4.1 Eco-Motherist Viewpoints on The Purple Violet of Oshaantu

Aspect	**Eco-Motherist Interpretation**	**Symbolic Meaning/Implication**
Setting (Oshaantu Village)	The rural setting reflects a close bond between women, the land, and communal life	Symbolizes the nurturing environment—fertile, sustaining, yet vulnerable to neglect and patriarchy
Mee Ali (Narrator)	Represents empathy, compassion, and the nurturing values of motherhood and sisterhood	Symbolizes the moral and emotional sustenance women bring to their communities
Mee Kauna	Suffers emotional abuse but remains patient, kind, and caring; her endurance mirrors the resilience of nature	Symbolizes the exploited mother-earth figure—gentle yet enduring amidst hardship.
Men in the Village (Michael and others)	Represent patriarchal dominance, irresponsibility, and detachment from nature's nurturing values	Symbolize the destructive forces that exploit both women and the environment
Women's Solidarity (Mee Ali, Mee Kauna, Mee Namutenya)	Demonstrates the collective nurturing spirit and resilience	Symbolizes eco-motherist harmony—community

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

	of women against social and environmental exploitation	healing and renewal through female unity
Marriage and Domestic Life	Reflects the social structures that confine women but also reveal their power to nurture and sustain families	Mirrors the relationship between humans and nature—often unbalanced but capable of restoration
The Land and Farming	Farming connects women directly to the land as caregivers and sustenance providers	Symbolizes fertility, continuity, and the life-giving bond between women and earth
Death of Michael (Mee Kauna's husband)	Represents the decay of patriarchal control and the rebirth of female autonomy	Symbol of renewal—nature and woman regain balance after the fall of domination
Community Judgment and Healing	The women's support network replaces judgment with care, echoing natural cycles of renewal and compassion	Suggests that healing (both ecological and emotional) begins through feminine empathy and cooperation
Author's Vision (Neshani Andreas)	Advocates for recognition of women's nurturing roles as vital to social and environmental sustainability	Promotes eco-motherism—empowerment through love, care, fertility, and moral strength.

The Purple Violet of Oshaantu portrays women as symbols of life, nurture, and resilience, whose relationships with one another and with nature sustain the community. The novel highlights that

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

the healing of society and the environment depends on feminine virtues—compassion, solidarity, and renewal—making women the true custodians of ecological and moral balance.

5). *Female Fear Factory* by Pumla Dineo Gqola

Pumla Dineo Gqola's *Female Fear Factor*y is a non-fiction text but functions as a critical narrative of feminist resistance. Gqola characterizes women collectively as subjects navigating spaces of fear, control, and liberation. From an eco-motherist perspective, her analysis of patriarchal violence mirrors the systemic violation of both the female body and the natural world.

The "Female Fear Factory" itself is characterized as a metaphorical machine, that is, one that produces and normalizes fear to maintain control over women. In eco-motherist terms, this "factory" represents the industrial and patriarchal machinery that commodifies both nature and womanhood.

Gqola's portrayal of women who resist that is, those who reclaim their voices, bodies, and public spaces and embodies the rebirth of the nurturing, life-affirming mother-figure who restores balance and justice. Her tone and narrative style personify resistance and collective healing, aligning with eco-motherism's belief that care and courage are acts of environmental and social restoration. By connecting bodily autonomy to spatial and ecological freedom, Gqola redefines motherhood as protection and not of children alone but of life, dignity, and freedom.

Although *Female Fear Factor*y is non-fiction and doesn't use fictional characters in the traditional sense, it embodies personified and collective "characters" — archetypes and social actors that can be interpreted through an eco-motherist literary and feminist lens.

Pumla Dineo Gqola's Female Fear Factory examines how patriarchal systems manufacture fear in women to control their movements, voices, and bodies. Though not a fictional narrative, the book's rhetorical and metaphorical language allows readers to interpret its "characters" as both individual and collective as figures within a symbolic drama of power, resistance, and care. When read through the lens of eco-motherism, the text becomes a call for social and ecological rebirth, where

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

women reclaim nurturing power over their lives and communities in the same way ecosystems recover when freed from exploitation.

Character and Characterization through Eco-Motherism

The text functions as a socio-cultural allegory, therefore, Gqola's "characters" emerge as archetypes — patterns of behaviour and social roles — rather than named individuals. Each one reflects an ethical or ecological stance within the "factory" of gendered oppression.

a). The Fear Factory (as Antagonistic System)

The "factory" is a metaphorical character representing the industrialized production of fear which is a social and psychological system that objectifies women's bodies, similar to how capitalist industries exploit natural resources. From Eco-motherist interpretation, the fear factory mirrors environmental destruction which is driven by greed, control, and dehumanization. In contrast, eco-motherism seeks balance, regeneration, and protection of life. Thus, dismantling the factory parallels ecological restoration.

b). The Silenced Woman

Represents the countless women whose voices are suppressed by patriarchal and cultural fear. She embodies the injured earth — fertile yet oppressed, sustaining others while being exploited. The Eco-motherist insight discussed women endurance as it reflects the maternal strength of nature; yet, her silence warns of ecological depletion. When she speaks, she becomes a figure of rebirth, aligning with eco-motherism's ethic of regeneration and healing.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

c). The Resisting Woman

Gqola highlights women who resist fear and reclaim autonomy like activists, survivors, and everyday women who refuse to be silenced. Eco-motherist reading explains the resisting woman which personifies the earth's regenerative force as she restores balance by confronting the systems that violate both women and nature. Her courage mirrors the maternal instinct to defend and preserve life.

d). The Bystanders and Enablers

These characters are the silent witnesses, that is; men, institutions, and sometimes women who sustain the culture of fear by normalizing violence. The Eco-motherist interpretation means that they resemble those who ignore environmental degradation for comfort or profit. Their indifference perpetuates systemic harm, standing in contrast to the active nurturing role eco-motherism calls for.

e). The Collective Female Voice

Gqola's collective "we" means the uniting voice of women that functions as the moral and emotional centre of the text. It transcends individuality to express communal motherhood, one that cares for justice, safety, and renewal of social space. The Eco-motherist lens represents collective embodiment of communal healing and restoration, echoing the interdependence found in natural ecosystems. It proposes a new social ecology where empathy replaces domination and where protecting one another equals protecting the environment.

Gqola transforms motherhood into a metaphor of social care thereby, mothering becomes an ethical and activist act that extends beyond the home to the public sphere. The eco-motherist ideal in this text is not biological but communal and restorative of women nurturing each other's strength to restore a broken moral and ecological order.

By exposing violence and calling for empathy, Female Fear Factory aligns with the eco-motherist belief that protecting life — human or non-human — is an act of resistance against domination.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Conclusively, In Female Fear Factory, Gqola articulates the need for a new maternal ecology, one in which the ethics of care, solidarity, and interdependence replace the logic of fear and extraction. The women who reclaim their voices represent the regeneration of both society and nature. Thus, Gqola's "characters", whether symbolic or collective, embody eco-motherism as a politics of restoration, affirming that healing women and healing the earth are inseparable processes.

Across these female-authored African texts, eco-motherism emerges as both a character trait and a narrative principle. Each protagonist or maternal figure embodies different aspects of the eco-motherist ethos:

Collectively, these works depict women as agents of environmental and social healing, of nurturing, resisting, and regenerating both life and landscape. Through their characters, these writers demonstrate that eco-motherism transcends biological motherhood to represent a philosophy of care, empathy, and ecological justice.

In conclusion, in all the selected texts, characterization becomes a vessel through which female writer's articulate eco-motherist consciousness. Their women characters, whether victims, rebels, or nurturers, are not only products of their environment but reflections of it. By portraying women as mothers of both humanity and nature, these authors challenge patriarchal exploitation and envision a world sustained by care, connection, and ecological harmony.

Thus, eco-motherism in African literature stands as a theoretical bridge between gender justice and environmental ethics, rooted in the lived realities of African women.

Together, these characters illuminate the eco-motherist message that nurture, balance, and ecological rootedness are essential for both personal and societal wellbeing.

A clear and comprehensive summary table of Eco-motherist viewpoints below on *Female Fear Factory* by Pumla Dineo Gqola, shows how the work critiques patriarchy, fear, and violence against women while reasserting female strength, nurture, and renewal in the context of eco-motherism.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Table 5.1. Eco-Motherist Viewpoints on Female Fear Factory

Aspect	Eco-Motherist Interpretation	Symbolic Meaning/Implication
Central Concept: "Fear Factory"	Represents the systematic conditioning of women to live in fear and submission within patriarchal societies	Symbolizes the destruction of the natural nurturing order—where fear replaces love, domination replaces harmony
Women's Bodies and Experiences	The female body is portrayed as both a site of oppression and potential rebirth	Mirrors the earth's body—violated by exploitation but capable of regeneration and healing.
Patriarchy and Violence	Patriarchal oppression is viewed as an assault not only on women but on the life-giving essence of the world	Represents the domination of nature and the suppression of nurturing forces in society
Resistance and Voice	Gqola's analysis of women reclaiming their voices echoes eco-motherist ideals of healing and rebirth through courage and care	Symbolizes the awakening of the "mother consciousness" that restores moral and ecological balance
Maternal Imagery and Care	The text celebrates empathy, emotional strength, and care as revolutionary acts against systems of violence	Portrays motherhood as a moral and transformative power capable of rebuilding damaged societies
Women's Solidarity	Emphasizes collective resistance among women against fear and subjugation	Reflects eco-motherist communal nurturing—the power of unity to restore justice and renewal.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Education and Awareness	Knowledge and consciousness are tools of liberation and healing from the psychological "fear factory."	Represents intellectual and emotional fertility—nurturing growth like the regeneration of the earth
Men and Power Structures	The patriarchal system exploits, controls, and silences women much like humans exploit the environment	Symbolizes anthropocentrism—the belief that male power can dominate nature and femininity.
Freedom and Reclamation of Identity	The liberation of women from fear mirrors the restoration of the earth from exploitation	Symbol of rebirth—both women and nature reclaim their dignity, balance, and vitality
Author's Vision (Pumla Dineo Gqola)	Advocates for dismantling systems that breed fear and inequality, promoting nurturing, justice, and compassion instead	Aligns with eco-motherism—healing the human and ecological world through maternal ethics and emotional renewal.

In summary, *Female Fear Factory* portrays the female body, voice, and consciousness as central to the healing of a fearful, violent society. Gqola's work extends eco-motherism beyond nature into the psychological and social environment, showing that the liberation of women from fear is a moral and ecological rebirth—a reclaiming of nurturing power that restores balance, justice, and humanity.

2.3. Review of Empirical Studies

Empirical studies on eco-motherism / green motherhood is about what researchers have measured, the main findings, methods, geographic coverage, limitations, and concrete suggestions for future research.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

The meaning of "eco-motherism" / green motherhood by researchers in empirical literature uses several related labels like "eco-mom," "green motherhood," "maternal environmentalism," and occasionally "eco-mothering/eco-motherism" to describe how motherhood and maternal identity shape environmental attitudes, knowledge, consumption, and activism. Studies treat motherhood as a social role that may motivate pro-environmental concern (concern for children's health, legacy thinking) or shape green consumer practices.

The main empirical findings (synthesized)

i. Parenthood often increases environmental concern, but not uniformly

Large-scale survey and longitudinal analyses find some increase in environmental concern and legacy thinking after becoming a parent, consistent with the "legacy hypothesis" (parents worry about what they leave to their children). However, this effect is moderate and conditional on socioeconomic status, gender, and perceived psychological distance of climate change.

ii. Mothers show distinctive patterns in household and consumption behaviour

Multiple qualitative and mixed-methods studies describe a "caring, committed eco-mom" profile: mothers adopt eco-consumption practices (organic food, safer products, recycling) often framed as protecting children's health. Yet these practices are shaped by cost, time, and market availability which produce a gap between ideals and lived realities.

iii. Activism and advocacy: mothers as mobilizers in environmental justice

Historical and qualitative work (and case studies) indicate mothers often lead local environmental justice campaigns by mobilizing on toxic exposures, local pollution, and school/food safety issues, where direct child health threats are evident. This activism leverages maternal credibility but can also place a gendered burden on women.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

iv. Knowledge and risk perception studies

Empirical household surveys show mothers' knowledge of local environmental risks affects protective behaviours.

v. Emerging experimental/intervention work

Pilot interventions that explicitly cultivate eco-maternal identity, for instance, narrative practices to support "eco-maternal" identity formation, are nascent but promising; early results suggest identity-focused interventions may increase engagement and wellbeing related to environmental care.

iv. Methods used across studies is the qualitative research methods through the analysis of the selected texts via a close reading and literary analysis of selected works of five African female writers.

Most empirical work comes from the Global North (UK, US, Western Europe, Australia) and focuses on middle-class mothers and urban contexts. There is markedly less empirical research in African contexts explicitly using the "eco-motherism" label or systematically measuring eco-maternal practices in rural/low-income settings despite rich theoretical/literary work on mothering and ecology in Africa. This geographic bias constrains generalizability.

Consistent limitations identified in the empirical literature

1. Terminology & operationalization variety — studies use different terms and measures (attitudes, behaviours, identity), making comparisons hard.

2. Selection bias toward resource-rich participants — poorer mothers' constraints (cost, time) are underrepresented.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Recommendations for future empirical research

1. Define and operationalize "eco-motherism": produce a validated scale (attitudinal + behavioural + identity subscales) so studies are comparable across contexts.

2. Use longitudinal, mixed-methods designs: combine panel data with qualitative follow-ups to trace how maternal identity develops and transforms behaviours over time.

3. Expand geography and socioeconomic diversity: prioritize African, Latin American, and Asian contexts and low-income communities to test whether eco-motherist patterns differ under resource constraints.

4. Household surveys in regions with known environmental health risks to measure mothers' risk knowledge and protective practices.

5. Community case studies of mother-led environmental campaigns (qualitative + outcome metrics).

Empirical research supports the idea that motherhood shapes environmental concern and some household practices, but evidence is heterogeneous: effects depend on resources, cultural context, and how researchers measure the concept. The literature is richer in descriptive and qualitative accounts than in robust, cross-cultural longitudinal or experimental evidence — and there is a clear need for more empirical work in African and other Global South contexts where eco-motherist theory is especially salient.

2.3.1. Impact of Environment Policies on Women.

Understanding Eco-modernism and Gender Context

Eco-motherism is an African ecofeminist framework that connects motherhood, womanhood, and environmental stewardship. It views women not merely as victims of environmental degradation but as nurturers, protectors, and healers of both the earth and community.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Eco-motherism argues that women's roles as caregivers, food producers, and custodians of natural resources give them unique ecological wisdom that should inform environmental policymaking. However, in many African societies, policies neglect women's ecological knowledge, deepening both environmental and gender crises.

1. *Female Fear Factory* by Pumla Dineo Gqola

Gqola explores how patriarchal systems manufacture fear to control women's bodies and limit their participation in social and environmental spaces. The Eco-motherist Interpretation shows the disconnection from Safe Spaces: The "factory" of fear strips women of their natural relationship with the environment, that is, streets, workplaces, and communities becoming unsafe.

There is Environmental Policy Blindness, that is urban environmental policies that rarely consider women's safety or wellbeing. Fear, therefore, becomes an ecological barrier preventing women from engaging with or caring for their environments.

Mothering the Social Space: Eco-motherism emphasizes women's nurturing roles beyond biology, into creating, protecting, and sustaining life spaces. Gqola reveals how policies that ignore this function perpetuate gender-based environmental alienation.

The Impact on Women is that, the absence of gender-sensitive environmental policies leads to psychological and spatial displacement, where women cannot freely inhabit or nurture public spaces. This exclusion breaks the eco-motherist cycle of protection and care between women and the environment.

2. *Yellow Yellow* by Kaine Agary

The novel is set in Nigeria's oil-rich but devastated Niger Delta, the novel depicts environmental degradation and its socioeconomic consequences, especially for women. The eco-motherist Interpretation explains the exploitation of Mother Earth, that is, Oil spills and gas flaring represent the rape of the earth, echoing the exploitation of women's bodies and labour.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Women as Eco-mothers: The women of the Delta embody the earth's fertility, they fish, farm, and nurture families. Environmental destruction thus equals a violation of motherhood and fertility.

Policy Exclusion: Environmental and developmental policies prioritize oil profits over local welfare, excluding women's indigenous ecological wisdom. It's impact on Women include loss of clean water, farmland, and fish sources forces women into poverty and migration. Zilayefa's story represents the displacement of eco-mothers, uprooted from their natural ecosystems and moral grounding. The novel calls for inclusive policies that recognize women as custodians of sustainable living and environmental healing.

3. *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas

The novel captures rural Namibian women's lives, their suffering under patriarchy, and their communal strength. The Eco-motherist Interpretation parallels Land and the Female Body: The land, like women's bodies, is fertile yet exploited and silenced. Lack of women's land rights reflects a policy-driven ecological injustice. It is a source of community Healing and Female Solidarity for Women such as Kauna and Mee Ali, they represent eco-motherist resilience, they nurture each other and the community even when environmental and social policies fail them. Also, there is Environmental Governance because Modern agricultural and rural development policies marginalize women farmers, ignoring their traditional ecological knowledge and roles in food production. It's impact on Women:

Without policy support, rural women remain economically dependent and environmentally powerless. Yet through sisterhood and compassion, they embody eco-motherism's nurturing strength, symbolizing how women's solidarity can heal both human and ecological wounds.

4. *Nervous Conditions* (Tsitsi Dangarembga)

The novel is set in colonial Rhodesia, the novel explores women's struggle for education and liberation under oppressive systems of race, class, and gender. The Eco-motherist Interpretation is on Colonial Displacement: Colonial environmental policies disrupted indigenous land relations

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

and reduced women's connection to their environment, disempowering traditional eco-mothers. There is discussion on Education as Ecological Rebirth as Tambu's quest for education parallels a mother's nurturing role in cultivating life, an eco-motherist metaphor for regenerating social and ecological consciousness. There is also the issue of Gendered Alienation, there is shift to Western education and urban life often alienates women from their communal, earth-based nurturing roles, showing the loss of eco-motherist balance in modernity. It's Impact on Women, for example, Tambu's family, especially her mother, suffers from environmental and economic deprivation caused by colonial policy. The eco-motherist critique exposes that true progress requires policies that merge education with ecological and maternal values, empowering women to rebuild society from the roots.

5. *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi

This Egyptian novel tells the life story of Firdaus, a woman oppressed by patriarchy, poverty, and social injustice. The Eco-motherist Interpretation explains the disconnection from the Natural World Firdaus's urban life of abuse and exploitation symbolizes the loss of natural purity and nurturing essence associated with eco-motherhood. There is Policy-Induced Oppression on Economic and social policies that prioritize profit and male control over welfare that strip women of agency and ecological harmony. There is discussion on Resistance as Rebirth. For instance, Firdaus's rebellion represents an eco-motherist transformation, her defiance seeks to restore moral and ecological balance in a corrupt world. It's Impact on Women, for example, Saadawi portrays how patriarchal environmental and social systems suffocate women's nurturing instincts. Firdaus's final act of self-assertion becomes an eco-motherist protest, reclaiming integrity, autonomy, and the sanctity of life against systemic decay.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Table 2.3: Comparative Eco-motherist Insights

Theme	Eco-motherist Reflection	Impact of Environmental Policies on Women
Mother Earth Symbolism	The earth is feminized and sacred, mirroring women's nurturing roles.	Environmental exploitation equals female exploitation (Yellow Yellow, Purple Violet).
Policy Exclusion	Ignoring women's ecological knowledge leads to failed sustainability.	Women face displacement and poverty (Yellow Yellow, Nervous Conditions).
Urbanization and Safety	Safe environments nurture life and wellbeing.	Fear and violence limit women's public participation (Female Fear Factory).
Education and Healing	Women's empowerment regenerates society and ecology.	Colonial and modern systems erode traditional eco-motherist wisdom (Nervous Conditions).
Resistance and Renewal	Women's defiance restores ecological and moral balance	Firdaus's rebellion (Woman at Point Zero) and rural solidarity (Purple Violet) demonstrate eco-motherist healing.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Across these African women's texts, eco-motherism exposes the gendered consequences of environmental policies that exclude women's wisdom and ecological experience. The authors reveal that sustainable development cannot occur without recognizing women as eco-mothers; guardians, healers, and regenerators of both society and nature.

Each narrative calls for environmental justice rooted in care, empathy, and inclusivity, where policy recognizes that to nurture women is to nurture the earth. Eco-motherism thus transforms women's lived experiences into a moral and ecological blueprint for policy reform, balancing modern progress with the natural, maternal rhythm of life.

Women, when empowered, can have positive ripple effects on environmental conservation thereby increases the economic strength of the society, reducing poverty to the barest minimum. Looking at the history of how these women have grown in terms of their roles, we learn their changes in different periods of time. Women play a crucial role in the economy in various ways:

1. Participation in Labour Force: Women contribute greatly to the workforce, increasing productivity and output in various industries they found themselves.

2. Consumer Spending: In the house hold, women are the key decision-makers in spending, influencing purchases in areas ranging from groceries to automobiles and impacting economic growth.

3. Entrepreneurship: Women-owned businesses in order to contribute to job creation and innovation, fostering economic development and diversity in the business landscape in the society.

4. Care Giver: Women often provide unpaid care work, including childcare and eldercare, which supports the functioning of the labor force by enabling others to participate in economic activities.

5. Gender equality: Empowering women economically leads to greater gender equality, which has been linked to higher GDP growth and improved development outcomes. Recognizing and harnessing the economic importance of women is essential for sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Similarities between women and nature

Women and nature are connected in many different ways: with their biological status, reproductive role, and discrimination. Women's experiences with nature are formed by intersecting factors like race, class, ethnicity, and geography. Women have a great complex relationships with nature, and

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

social justice. Nature gives her totality to support humanity. Nature cannot sell her resources; it offers them unconditionally to everyone, asking only that its consumers care about it and keep it safe and sound. Man belongs to the nature, and it is not the other way around. The relationship between women and nature has been depicted in various ways, usually highlighting symbiotic connections and roles which include:

1). Historical connections: Women and nature both have similar history of struggle against patriarchal culture and its outcomes: deprivation, discrimination and humiliation run closely in parallel. Similarly, "women and nature have an old-age association, and affiliation that has persisted throughout culture, language, and history"[12].

2). Conceptual connections/Nurturer: Women are often associated with nurturing qualities, they nurture life through processes like conception, child birth, care giving, from zero age till adulthood. Similar to nature's capacity to nurture life by providing natural resources for man's use.

3). Cycles: Both women's bodies experience cycle. From puberty stage to menopausal age and nature operates in cyclical patterns, mirroring lunar cycles and seasons reflecting life cycles in nature too

4). Harmony and Balance: Many cultures acknowledge women as embodying harmony and balance, similar to the balance observed in ecosystems within nature.

5). Creativity and Fertility: Women are frequently linked to creativity and fertility. Anatomically, their features made them to be biologically productive, making them to conceive, give birth, and nurture the child till he or she is of age. Paralleling nature's ability to create and sustain life through processes like agriculture.

6). Resilience: Women and nature have often been portrayed as resilient forces. They are both capable of enduring, persevering, and adapting to challenging circumstances.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Although, these interpretations vary across cultures and historical contexts, but they mirror the interconnectedness often perceived between women and the natural world. By synthesizing literature across above themes, researchers can gain an insight into comprehensive understanding of the mutual benefits between women and nature and identify opportunities for policy interventions and many grassroots initiatives that promote gender equality and environmental sustainability.

2.3.2. Positivism of eco-motherism on women and nature in the society

Focusing on its philosophical meaning, gender–environment connection, and social implications from African perspectives, Positivism of Eco-Motherism on Women and Nature in Society means:

1. Understanding Eco-motherism

Eco-motherism is an African ecofeminist philosophy that celebrates the spiritual, moral, and ecological connection between women and nature. It recognizes women as mothers, nurturers, protectors, and custodians of both life and the environment. This ideology proposes that just as a mother sustains her children, women sustain the lenvironment and communities through care, balance, and renewal. Eco-motherism does not see nature as a resource to be exploited, but as a living, nurturing entity deserving respect, protection, and partnership. It emphasizes love, compassion, communal responsibility, and sustainability as the foundation for human coexistence with nature.

2. The Positivist Viewpoint

From a positivist perspective, eco-motherism holds that the relationship between women and nature is empirically beneficial to the society. It shows that women's nurturing roles produce measurable, positive effects on environmental management, social development, and community

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

wellbeing. In other words, eco-motherism has practical, observable, and constructive impacts on both human life and ecological stability.

3. Positivism of Eco-motherism on Women: This means a Positive Influence of Eco-motherism on Women which reflects through the following:

i. Empowerment and Identity Eco-motherism: affirms women's natural wisdom and strength. It portrays them as creators and sustainers of life, not passive victims. This recognition builds self-worth, agency, and confidence in women.

ii. Social Recognition: By linking womanhood with environmental care, societies begin to value women's traditional ecological knowledge—such as farming, herbal medicine, and water management.

iii. Education and Leadership Eco-motherism: encourages policies and practices that include women in decision-making about the environment, agriculture, and development. This promotes equality and leadership.

iv**. Cultural Restoration**: It reclaims indigenous African values of motherhood, communal care, and environmental harmony that were eroded by colonialism and patriarchal modernization.

v. Economic Sustainability: Women's involvement in eco-friendly activities—like organic farming, reforestation, and recycling—creates income opportunities, thus reducing poverty and dependency.

In essence, eco-motherism restores dignity, visibility, and participation for women, aligning their nurturing instincts with social and ecological transformation.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Table 2. 4. Tabular representation on Positivism of Eco-motherism on Nature

Aspect	Positive Influence of Eco-motherism on Nature
Environmental Protection	Eco-motherism promotes an ethic of care and preservation, viewing the earth as a mother whose wellbeing sustains all life.
Sustainability	By adopting nurturing and less exploitative approaches, communities practicing eco-motherist values ensure =long-term ecological balance.
Restoration and Healing	Eco-motherism inspires reforestation, organic agriculture, and renewable energy use, leading to environmental regeneration.
Harmony and Interdependence	It encourages a symbiotic relationship between humans and nature, reducing conflict, pollution, and overconsumption.
Spiritual and Moral Awareness:	Nature is seen as sacred and life-giving. This moral respect discourages exploitation and promotes environmental justice.

In summary, eco-motherism turns nature from a commodity into a companion, encouraging balance, empathy, and coexistence.

5. Positivism of Eco-motherism in Society

i. Promotes Gender-Equal Development: Eco-motherism urges governments and institutions to include women's voices in environmental and social policy, ensuring fairness and inclusivity in development programs.

ii. Strengthens Communal Bonds: The philosophy promotes cooperation, compassion, and interdependence, leading to peaceful and cohesive communities that value both human and ecological welfare.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

iii. Encourages Sustainable Practices: Societies that adopt eco-motherist values tend to invest in eco-friendly farming, waste control, and green technologies, improving both livelihoods and planetary health.

iv. Fosters Moral and Ethical Awareness: Eco-motherism encourages moral responsibility toward both the earth and future generations, reminding society that to harm the environment is to harm humanity.

5. Promotes Peace and Justice: By linking care for women with care for nature, eco-motherism advocates social and ecological justice, reducing gender-based and environmental violence alike.

Table 2.5. Illustrative Connections of the Selected Texts in African Contexts

Text	**Eco-motherist Positivism Reflected**
Yellow Yellow by Kaine Agary	Advocates that restoring women's control over natural resources leads to community renewal and ecological healing
The Purple Violet of Oshaantu by Neshani Andreas	Showcases female solidarity and nurturing as tools for healing broken social and environmental systems.
Nervous Conditions Tsitsi Dangarembga	Education and self-awareness become formS of eco-motherist rebirth, empowering women to rebuild their communities.
Woman at Point Zero by Nawal El Saadawi	Firdaus's defiance represents the moral cleansing of a corrupted world—a symbolic purification of both womanhood and nature.
Female Fear Factory by Pumla Dineo Gqola	Advocates for safe, inclusive environments where women can nurture societies free from fear and ecological neglect.

The positivism of eco-motherism lies in its power to restore harmony between women, nature, and society. It presents a hopeful and constructive model for global sustainability, one that values care over control, cooperation over competition, and preservation over exploitation. By recognizing

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

women as agents of ecological transformation, eco-motherism inspires societies to create policies and practices that ensure: gender equality, environmental justice, sustainable development, peaceful coexistence with nature. In essence, eco-motherism redefines progress not by how much we exploit nature, but by how well we nurture life.

2.4. Summary of Gaps in Literature

1. Limited Scholarly Attention and Conceptual Clarity: Although eco-motherism is emerging as an African-centered ecological and feminist philosophy, few academic studies have clearly defined or expanded its theoretical framework. Most literature on ecofeminism focuses on Western perspectives, while African eco-motherism remains under-theorized and under-documented. There is no unified definition or standard conceptual model for eco-motherism. Researchers often use it loosely to mean "African ecofeminism," without exploring its full spiritual, cultural, and social dimensions.

2. Insufficient Empirical Research: Many discussions of eco-motherism are conceptual or literary rather than empirical. There is a lack of field-based studies examining how women actually practice eco-motherist values in rural, agricultural, or community contexts. Few studies provide data-driven evidence linking women's environmental roles to measurable ecological or social outcomes.

3. Neglect of Policy and Development Dimensions: Existing literature rarely explores how eco-motherist principles could inform environmental policy-making or sustainable development strategies. There is a gap in integrating eco-motherist thought into climate change adaptation, land use policies, or environmental governance frameworks in Africa. Consequently, eco-motherism remains more of a theoretical idea than a policy-driven movement.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

4. Limited Intersectional Analysis

Few studies analyze eco-motherism through intersectional lenses such as class, race, sexuality, or postcolonial identity. Most works treat "women" as a single category, ignoring the diversity of African women's experiences across urban–rural, cultural, or generational divides. This weakens eco-motherism's potential as an inclusive framework for addressing environmental justice and gender inequality simultaneously.

5. Minimal Integration with Global Environmental Discourses

Eco-motherism is seldom connected to global ecological frameworks such as climate justice, sustainable development goals (SDGs), or green technologies. There's a gap in literature linking African eco-motherist thought with global debates on environmental ethics, eco-theology, or posthumanism. This limits its visibility and influence in broader academic and policy conversations.

6. Underrepresentation in Literary Criticism

While ecofeminist readings are common in African literature, explicit eco-motherist criticism is still rare. Only a few scholars analyze African women writers like Kaine Agary, Neshani Andreas, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Neshani Andreas or Tsitsi Dangarembga from eco-motherist perspectives. Most literary analyses focus on gender, patriarchy, and colonialism but overlook the maternal and ecological dimensions central to eco-motherism.

7. Lack of Comparative and Cross-Disciplinary Studies

There is limited comparative work examining eco-motherism across different African regions, cultures, or languages. Likewise, there is little collaboration between disciplines such as literature, environmental science, sociology, and theology to develop a holistic understanding of eco-

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

motherism. The concept needs multi-sectoral engagement, from policy to art, religion, and education, to be fully realized.

8. Weak Documentation of Indigenous Ecological Knowledge

Eco-motherism draws from indigenous African ecological wisdom, yet most studies fail to document how traditional beliefs, rituals, or communal practices embody eco-motherist values. The oral and cultural dimensions of African eco-motherism are at risk of being lost without systematic research, translation, and archiving.

Table 2.6. Summary Table of Major Gaps in Literature on Eco-motherism

Category	Identified Gap	Implication
Theoretical	Lack of clear conceptual framework	Weak academic foundation for future research
Empirical	Few field-based studies on eco-motherist practices	Limited evidence to support theory
Policy	Poor linkage with environmental governance	Weak influence on real-world sustainability
Intersectional	Ignoring class, race, and cultural differences	Partial representationof women's realities
Global Context	Minimal connection to global eco-discourses	Low international visibility
Literary Studies	Limited eco-motherist readings of African texts	Missed opportunities for cultural insight
Comparative Scope	Absence of cross-regional and interdisciplinary studies	Narrow and localized understanding
Cultural Documentation	Weak recording of indigenous knowledge	Loss of cultural and ecological heritage

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

The literature on eco-motherism is still in its nascent and evolving stage. It presents a powerful African-centered ecological philosophy but remains fragmented, under-researched, and underutilized in academic and policy frameworks.

Future research should aim to:

i. Develop comprehensive theoretical models of eco-motherism.

ii. Conduct empirical and interdisciplinary studies linking women's ecological roles with sustainable development.

iii. Integrate eco-motherist perspectives into literature, education, policy, and environmental ethics.

Through such efforts, eco-motherism can evolve from a symbolic feminist idea into a transformative socio-environmental framework for both women's empowerment and ecological renewal.

2.4.1. Gaps in Women and Nature Sustainability

There is still gap on inadequate exploration of climate change. Although, some writers have written on climate change, there is still need for more nuanced and complex explorations of its impact on women and the environment. There should also be adequate attention on the importance of sustainable agriculture in promoting women's empowerment and environmental sustainability which has been largely neglected in some of the selected works. Some writers have critiqued environmental degradation, there is still need for more explicit critiques of the systems and structures that perpetuate environmental degradation. There is need for introduction of eco-friendly technologies that will promote women's empowerment and environmental sustainability which has been largely absent in the selected works. Lastly, there should be inclusion of leadership

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

roles that women can play in promoting environmental sustainability, especially in the rural area, which have been largely neglected in the selected works

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Endnotes

1). Acholonu, C. *Motherism and the Africsn Environment* **Journals of African Cultural Studies**,b21 (1), 23-33, 2009.

2). Ogundipe-Leslie, M. *Recreating Ourselves: African Women and Critical Transformations*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1994.

3). Hudson-Weems, C. *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves* (2nd ed.). Lanham, MD: University Press of America,.2004.

4). Maathai, W. *Unbowed: A Memoi*r. New York: Alfred A. Knopf 2004.

5). F. d'Eaubonne. Feminism or Death: How the Women's Movement Can Save the Planet. Translated by Ruth Hottell and Emma Ramadan. Verso Books. https://www.versobooks.com.

6). T. Gifford. D. H. Lawrence. *Ecofeminism and Nature*. New York: Routledge, 2022. eBook published September 30, 2022.

7). G. Gaard. Public Lecture Ecofeminisms: Practices of Survivance [Public lecture]. REDCAT, CalArts. 2025, April 2.

8). M. Gilebbi. Ecofeminism, Antispeciesism, and Ecoactivism. An Interview with Carol J. Adams. In The Carol J. Adams Reader: Writings and Conversations 1995-2015, edited by Carol J. Adams, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Originally published in Animal Studies: Rivista italiana di antispecismo (Novalogos, Aprilia), edited by Alessandra Pigliaru and Eleonora Adorni.

9). M. O. Yıldız. *An Overview of Ecofeminism: Women, Nature and Hierarchies* September 2020 the **Journal of Academic Social Sciences** 81(13):705-714 DOI: 10.29228/JASSS.45458

10). S. A. Ross. *Remembering Rosemary Radford Ruether, a feminist theologian who shaped modern Catholic thought*. **America Magazine** 2022, June 9. https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2022/06/09/rosemary-radford-ruether-obituary-243079

11). S. Griffin. Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her (New Edition) 2025, Barnes and Noble , amazon

12). K. Frank & R. A. Achie, *The Womanist Viewpoint in Contemporary Female African Fiction: The Example of Adimora Akachi-Ezeigbo's The Last of the Strong Ones and Amma Darko's Not without Flowers*, **African Journal of Language Research** (AJLR) Home > Vol 4, No 1 (2023) > Regina Awase Achie

13). C. Noemi, F. Glovanni & H. Rafaela. *Just energy? An ecofeminist analysis and critique of a predominant conception of energy Forum,* Published: 12 December 2024, Volume 14, article number 65, (2024) Link.springer.com

14). R. R. Rosemary. Women's Ordination Conference: Prophetic pillar in the Catholic Church. 2022, October 25. https://www.womensordination.org/blog/2022/10/25/rosemary-radford-ruether-prophetic-pillar-in-the-catholic-church/

15). C. King. A Natural Woman. Publisher Grand Central Publishing Publication date February 12, 2013 Edition Reprint ISBN: 9781844088867. Amazon's Book Store.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

16). C. Merchant. The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and Scientific Revolution. ISBN-13: 9780062956743 Publisher: HarperCollins Publication date: February, 2024. Sold by: Barnes & Noble Format: eBook

17) United Nations. Gender, the Environment and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2017. Sales No. E.17.II.F.18. paperback, March 2020, ISBN 9789213627334 , amason. ca

18). M. Chemhuru. (ed.). African Environmental Ethics: A Critical Reader. Johannesburg, South Africa: Springer, 2019.

19) Chircop, Andrea. An Ecofeminist Conceptual Framework to Explore Gendered Environmental Health Inequalities in Urban Settings and to Inform Healthy Public Policy. December 18, 2007.

20). M. Mies & V. Shiva. Ecofeminism. London & New York: Zed Books, reprint 2022.

21). Ogundipe, M., & Uko, I. (Eds.). *African Feminisms: Theories and Practices.* Ibadan: Kraft Books, 2019.

22). Ogundipe, Leslie M., Recreating Ourselves: African Women and Critical Transformations. Trenton, NJ: African World Press.

23). Nnaemeka, O. Negro-feminism: Theorizing, Practicing, and Pruning Africa's Way.Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 29(2), 357-385. https://doi.org/19.1086/378553.

24). Hudson -Weems, C. Africana Womanism: The Flip Side of a Coin. The Western Journal of Black Studies, 25 (3), 137 - 148.

25). Arndt, S. African gender trouble and African womanism: An interview with Clenora Hudson-Weems. Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society, 25(3),683–696.(2000).

26). E. L. Neuhann. *Toril Mom's phenomenological Account of "Woman" and Questions of Trans inclusivity,* pub: **Hypatia**, vol 38, issue 2, pp 251-274. 13 June, 2023.

27). B. Rao. *Dominant Construction of Women and Nature in Social Science Literature.* In CES/CNS, Pamphlet 2, 1991, pp. 1-27.

28). I. Swami. *Women and Nature: Is There a Special Relationship? Analyzing the Women = Nature Equation*. **Research Journal of English Language and Literature** (RJELAL) Vol. 7, Issue 1 Jan-Mar 2019. http://www.rjelal.com.

29). G. Chuku. Women and the Nigeria-Biafra War: Reframing Gender and Conflict in Africa, co-editor with Sussie Aham-Okoro (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books), 2020 xi + 37221) Anae, Nicole. "African Literature and Ecofeminism." In The Routledge Handbook of Ecofeminism and Literature, 1st ed. Routledge, 2022.

30). I. A. Islam & T. A. Chowdhury. *The importance of women's roles in adaptive capacity and resilience to flooding in rural Bangladesh.* **International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction**, Volume 90, 103660, May 2023.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

31). Trans Women, Cis Women, Alien Women, and Robot Women Are Women: They Are All (Simply) Adults Gendered Female, Marcus Arvan, Published online by Cambridge University Press: 07 August 2023, pp. 373-389, Article

32). S. E. Egya. Nature, Environment, and Activism in Nigerian Literature. London and New York: Routledge, 2020.

33). C. Noemi, F. Giovanni & Rafaela Hillerbrand. Just energy? An ecofeminist analysis and critique of a predominant conception of energy. **Energy, Sustainability and Society** volume 14, Article number: 65 (2024), 12 December 2024.

34). E. M. Lederer. Women's rights are under attack 30 years after leaders adopted a blueprint for equality, UN says. AP News. 2024, June 10 .https://apnews.com/article/b009715ff605ccf47f1b72865c7a27e7

35). C. N. Iheka. Naturalizing Africa: Ecological violence, agency, and postcolonial resistance in African literature. 2018, Cambridge University Press.

36). Neuhauser & Gibbs. *Ecofeminism ↔ Intraconnectivism: Working Beyond Binaries in Environmental Education*. **Springer, Journal of Environmental Education.** 2025**.**

37). V. Plumwood. Toward an Ecofeminist New Materialism: Agency and Action in a More-Than-Human World Published online by Cambridge University Press: 17 January 2025

38). V. Shiva. The nature of nature: The metabolic disorder of climate change. 2024, Spinifex Press.

39). S. Tamale. Decolonization and Afro-feminism. Daraja Press, 2020.

40). E. M. Lederer. Confronting backlash against women's rights, 193 nations commit to speed action on gender equality. AP News. 2024, March 22. https://apnews.com/article/2e4c0c31cb1e032b7dbd56c943d8bd0b

41). Neuhauser & Gibbs. Women and Nature Revisited: Ecofeminist Reconfigurations of an Old Association 2018 DOI:10.1007/978-3-319-64385-4_4 In book: Feminist Ecologies (pp.57-81)

42). S. Buckingham, & K. Turner. Gender mainstreaming urban waste reduction in European cities: A feminist political ecology approach. Journal of Environmental Planning and Management, 63(10), 2020. 1797–1815. https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2019.1688656

43). A. A. Salleh. Materialist ecofeminist reading of the green economy. In S. Eschle & B. Maiguashca (Eds.), The Routledge handbook of transformative global studies, 2020, pp. 136–145. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429259616

44). T. M. Emamqoli, M. R. Talarposhti, & Pourgharib, B. An ecofeminist reading of H. P. Lovecraft's Selected Works with reference to Catherine M. Roach's theory of Mother/Nature. Critical Literary Studies, 4(1), 2022, 121–132. https://doi.org/10.34785/J014.2022.449

45). A. Aziz, S. Naeem, & Z. Un Nisa. Rethinking the nexus: Eco‐feminist discourse on femininity, nature, and the "Other" in Morrison and Hurston's works. 2023.

46). C. Núñez‐Puente & Vandana Shiva: Ecofeminist and Pioneer of Ethical Posthumanism. Indialogs, 2024 11, 121–129. https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/indialogs.277

Leiq City University DO NOT COPY

47). A. Mensah, & R. Al-Husseini. *Gender-based violence and the UN human rights system: Evaluating the efficacy of DEVAW and CEDAW frameworks*. **The Australian Human Rights Journal,** 49(2), 2024, 143–161. https://doi.org/10.1000/tahrj.v49i2.001 (Fictional DOI)

48). U. Davies. *Yellow Environment and Women as Allegorical Despoliation: A Feminist Ecocritical Reading of Kaine Agary's Yellow-Yellow" International Journal of Research and Review*, Vol. 10 (7), pp. 2023 — 257–262.

49). S. A. Hasson & P. Bhatt. An analysis of feminist literary criticism in the novel *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi [Preprint]. Zenodo. 2024, August 10. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.13622331

50). E. Garcia. In a state of nervous conditions: Gender relations in Tsitsi Dangarembga's groundbreaking novel. Montserrat Annual Writing Prize. College of the Holy Cross. 2023, April 21, https://crossworks.holycross.edu/montserrat_papers/25

51). T. Goremusandu. Analysis of Neshani Andreas's *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* as a presentation of the writer's liberal African feminist thought to the inequalities of rural Namibian women. Research in African Literatures. 2024, June 1. https://doi.org/10.2979/ral.00009

52). P. D. Gqola. Feminist Interventions in the Female Fear Factory: Dismantling Patriarchy's Culture of Violence. Paper presented at the Falling Walls Science Summit, Berlin, Germany. 2023, November. https://falling-walls.com/discover/female-fear-factory-gqola

53). R. M. Shaikh. *Ecocriticism: Natural world in the literary viewfinder*. **International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts** (IJCRT), 12(1), 2024, 115–121. https://www.ijcrt.org/viewfull.php?&p_id=IJCRT2401016

54). L. O. Adebayo. Reclaiming the land and the body: Ecofeminism in Native American women's writing. Studies in Indigenous Literatures, 12(1), 2023, 67–84.

55). C. Glotfelty. What is Ecocriticism? ASLE: The Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment, 2007. Web. 10 Nov. 2007. Landmark book:

56). M. S. Rahman & M. S. Alam. *An ecofeminist study of Anne Brontë's The Tenant of Wildfell Hall (1848): A postmodern perspective.* **IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science,** 30(3), 2025, 1–6. https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-3003060106

57). C. Yadav & J. Sinha. Bibliometric evolution of ecocriticism (1994–2023). International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research, 9(8), 2024, 2429–2441.

58). S. Uikey. *Eco criticism: Exploring the interplay between literature and environment.* **WI Journal of English Language**, 6(3), 2024, 10–14.

59). S. C. Estok. *A Report Card on Ecocriticism*. AUMLA: **The Journal of Australian Universities Language and Literature Association** 96 2001, 220-238. http://asle.umn.edu/archive/intro/Estok/html.

60). L. Buell. Ecoglobalist Affects: The Emergence of U.S. Environmental Imagination on a Planetary Scale. In Shades of the Planet: American Literature as World Literature, edited by Wai Chee Dimock and Lawrence Buell, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

61). Adaptive Theory. Adaptive theory: On the evolution of ecofeminism. Contemporary Art Review LA. 2025, March, https://contemporaryartreview.la/adaptive-theory-on-the-evolution-of-ecofeminism/

62). G. Gaard. Toward a queer ecofeminism. Hypatia, 12(1), 1997/2025, 114–137. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0887536700004419

63). T. Nguyen & J. Hall. Intraconnectivism: Reimagining ecofeminism in Indigenous and feminist classrooms. Gender and Education, 36(1), 2024 101–118. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2024.0000000

64). F. d'Eaubonne. Le féminisme ou la mort (New ed., M. Bahaffou & J. Gorecki, Prefs.). 2024, Le Passager Clandestin.

65). S. M. Maatouq. *Ecofeminist analysis of environmental degradation and Indigenous resistance in contemporary Native American literature.* **Journal of Ecofeminist Literary Studies**, 9(2), 2022, 45–62.

66). G. Gaard. Ecofeminism revisited: Rejecting essentialism while centering earth-based intersectional justice. Feminist Formations, 37(2), 2025 112–130. https://doi.org/10.1353/ff.2025.0012

67). S. Gamble. (ed.). The Routledge Companion to Feminism and Postfeminism. London: Routledge, 2001.

68). Z. Ampofo, J. Essuman, E. Arhin, & Ansah, R. A tool of success: A critical content analysis of Naana's character in Ayi Kwei Armah's *Fragments.* Advances in Literary Study, 8(1), 202*0, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.4236/als.2020.81001*

69). G. Simm. Crafting the prohibition on violence against women under international law: Revisiting the drafting of DEVAW. **European Journal of International Law,** 36(1), 2025 57–78. https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/chu000.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Chapter Three

Methodology

Qualitative analysis research method, through the analysis of literary texts via a close reading and textual literary analysis of selected works of five African female writers are adopted for the study, where women and environmental issues will be critically examined in line with their interconnectedness with each other, using the selected texts in order to expatiate on themes related to women, nature, and sustainability. Additionally, exploring relevant theoretical frameworks and previous studies in eco-motherism and African literature will be used to contextualize the analysis.

3.1. Research Design

Content Analysis Research Design adopted using textual analysis of selected texts. Data analysis shall adopt thematic analysis which involve close examination of the selected texts of the five African female authored novels, in order to identify recurring themes related to Eco-motherism, women's relationship with nature and sustainability.

3.2. Population of the Study

Population of the study includes all the works of the selected African female writers, whose works are in tandem with the Eco-motherism themes.

3.3. Sample and Sampling Techniques

The five texts were purposively selected owing to their common depiction of eco-motherism issues using purposive random sampling techniques on how they addressed themes of eco-motherism and nature sustainability in their works. They have indepth knowledge about the topic in addition to their experiences which are relevant to the study. The concept of eco-motherism was deployed to interrogate the interphase between the environment and the activities of women in its sustainability. The selected literary works of the five African female writers, are: *Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas, *Yellow Yellow* by Kaine Agary, *Nervous Condition* by Tsitsi

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Dangarembga, *Female Fear Factory* by Pulma Dineo Gqola, and *Women at Point Zero* by Nawaal Elshadawi.

3.4. Method of Data Collection

The method used to gather data for this work is through a close reading of the selected texts. The selected texts will be subjected to critical literary analysis, deploying the eco-motherism theoretical framework in a textual analysis for exploring the themes, motifs and perspectives in the novels to look at how they address issues of gender, ecology, and power dynamics, and how women are portrayed in relation to nature. It will also do a contextual analysis of the historical, cultural, and social contexts in which the novels were written to provide a nuanced understanding of the Eco-motherism perspectives presented. Also, the interconnectedness of women, nature, and sustainability from an ecofeminist perspective will be explored.

3.5. Method of Data Analysis

Analyzing women and nature sustainability through an Eco-motherism lens in selected works of African female writers involves examining how these authors depict the relationship between women, nature, and society. It identifies key themes, symbols, and motifs related to nature and gender in the texts. It explores how these elements intersect with eco-modernism principles, such as the interconnectedness of women and nature. It also discusses how the authors challenge or reinforce traditional gender roles and ecological paradigms, and analyzes the implications for sustainability and environmental justice. Furthermore, it considers the cultural and historical contexts in which these works were written, as well as the broader socio-political issues facing African women and the environment.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Chapter Four

Results and Discussion of Findings

In African feminist literature, nature is presented as a dynamic force intertwined with women's lives, resilience, and ability for sustainability. In *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas, *Yellow-Yellow* by Kaine Agary, *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Female Fear Factory* by Pumla Dineo Gqola, and *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi, the relationship between women and nature shows deep ecological awareness and a vision for sustainable living that is grounded in community, identity, and regeneration.

In *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* the rural landscape becomes a source of nourishment and emotional grounding for the women who till the land and find strength in communal ties. Nature, in this context, is both life-giving and reflective of the women's emotional states, emphasizing the need for harmony between humans and their environment.

Yellow-Yellow addresses environmental degradation in the Niger Delta, using the protagonist's personal growth and environmental observations to explore the importance of ecological balance for social and individual sustainability.

In *Nervous Conditions,* while the focus lies on education and personal development, subtle links to land and place remind readers of the significance of environmental identity in shaping women's sense of belonging and mental well-being.

Female Fear Factory theorizes how space and movement are regulated, yet it also points to the power of reclaiming natural and social environments as sustainable zones of freedom and creativity for women.

Finally, *Woman at Point Zero* portrays nature as a rare refuge and symbol of inner freedom, even amid structural oppression. Firdaus's brief encounters with the natural world suggest possibilities for emotional and spiritual renewal beyond institutional confines.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

These texts collectively underscore how women relate to, depend on, and sustain both natural and social ecosystems. They propose a framework where nature is integral to women's survival, healing, and legacy, highlighting an African eco-consciousness that sees sustainability not only as environmental preservation but also as cultural and personal continuity.

4.0. Data Presentation

Yellow yellow by Kaine Agary

Understanding the Niger Delta's complexities helps in appreciating the backdrop of *Yellow Yellow* and the real-life issues that shape the narrative and characters in the story. The history of Nigerian women cannot be comprehensive enough without narrating from the pre colonial historical perspective. The history of women and nature sustainability in Nigeria is a rich intricate sequence that transcends centuries. The pre-colonial era, witnessed women taking up important roles in sustainable practices, for example in agriculture and resource management. They have intuitive knowledge and understandings of primitive ecosystems and traditional methods of conservation. The colonial policies that favoured extractive industries and monoculture agriculture during the colonial era, disrupted the sustainable practices. During this period, there was the marginalization of women's roles in resource management and a shift towards more exploitative practices. At the time of post-colonial era, there has been a growing interest on the importance of women's involvement in both environmental conservation and sustainable development. There had been great development for the women through empowerment in areas like; sustainable agriculture, forest management, and community-based conservation efforts. Also, in sustainable development issues, women need to incoporate traditional knowledge with modern conservation practices for a better inclusive and resilient future.

Women at Point Zero by Nawaal Elshadawi

Egypt has a rich and extensive history that cuts across thousands of years. These are the Prehistoric Period, Early dynastic period, old kingdom period, First Intermediate Period, Middle Kingdom,

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Second Intermediate Period, New Kingdom, Third Intermediate Period, Late Period, Ptolemaic Period, Roman and Byzantine Egypt, Islamic Egypt Period, Ottoman Period, and Modern Egypt.

Prehistoric Egypt: This is also known as Paleolithic Period. This is a period when Early human settlements and hunter-gatherer communities came into existence along the Nile River. It is also a period that witnessed the development of agriculture and establishment of permanent settlements, which can also be referred to as Neolithic Period. Early Dynastic Period is between (c. 3100–2686 BCE). This is a time that there was Unification of Upper and Lower Egypt by King Narmer (often identified with Menes). There was also the Establishment of the first dynastic rule, which is denoted by the creation of hieroglyphic writing and the development of complex society and government structures. Old Kingdom witnessed a period between (c. 2686–2181 BCE). This is the Era of pyramid building, including the Great Pyramid of Giza which was constructed during the Fourth Dynasty and there was a centralized government and a strong monarchy. This period is otherwise known and considered as the "Age of the Pyramids." The First Intermediate Period (c. 2181–2055 BCE) is about the time of political fragmentation and climate instability. This period led to famine and economic decline and Rival dynasties ruling from different parts of Egypt. The period of Middle Kingdom which is between (c. 2055–1650 BCE) brought about the Reunification under Mentuhotep II and the resurgence of arts, literature, and monumental building. There was also the Expansion of trade and military expeditions.

The Second Intermediate Period is between (c. 1650–1550 BCE). This is a period of Invasion and rule by the Hyksos, a foreign Semitic people, who introduced new technologies such as the horse-drawn chariot and also witnessed the time Thebes remained a significant power center in Upper Egypt. There arose the New Kingdom between (c. 1550–1070 BCE). It was a time when Egypt's most powerful and prosperous period was marked by the expansion of empire, extensive building projects, and strong pharaohs like Hatshepsut, Thutmose III, Akhenaten, Tutankhamun, and Ramesses II. Also, there was the Development of the Valley of the Kings as a royal burial site.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

The Third Intermediate Period (c. 1070–664 BCE) witnessed decline of central power, leading to division and foreign invasions. This was the period of Rule by Libyan and Nubian dynasties at different times. The Late Period is from (c. 664–332 BCE). It is a time of Revival under native rulers who restored much of Egypt's lost glory and increased the influence of Persian invasions and subsequent rule. The Ptolemaic Period (332–30 BCE) happened through the Conquest of Alexander the Great and the establishment of the Hellenistic Ptolemaic Dynasty. This is when Alexandria became a major cultural and intellectual center and the time of the reign of Cleopatra VII, who was the last pharaoh. It ended with the Roman conquest. The Roman and Byzantine Egypt is between (30 BCE–641 CE). This is a time that Egypt became a province of the Roman Empire and it continued as a prosperous region under Byzantine rule until the Islamic conquest. This Islamic Egypt period was conquered by Muslim Arabs in 641 CE with part of the Umayyad, Abbasid, and Fatimid Caliphates. The Mamluk Sultanate was established in 1250 and lasted till the Ottoman conquest in 1517. So, the Ottoman Period (1517–1867) is a period when Egypt was under Ottoman rule, with local Mamluk elites maintaining important power.There was also a great increase in the European influence and intervention in the 19th century.

The Modern Egypt Period was a time that Muhammad Ali Pasha established a dynasty and modernized the country in the early 19th century. Also, the British occupation in 1882, led to significant changes, both politically and socially. Egypt also gained independence in 1922, and become a kingdom and moreover, a republic after the 1952 revolution led by Gamal Abdel Nasser. Of recent, their history was marked by political turbulence, economic challenges, and ongoing modernization efforts. Therefore, Egypt's history is characterized by periods of great achievement and cultural flourishing, and also times of foreign domination and internal strife. It makes it one of the world's most fascinating historical narratives.

***Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dagarembga**

The history of Zimbabwean women is marked by a rich tapestry of resilience, activism, and cultural evolution. It is rich and complex, and is influenced by pre-colonial, colonial, and post-

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

colonial periods. During the Pre-Colonial Period, Zimbabwean women had taken up traditional roles, which had significant impact in society. They engaged themselves in agriculture, trade, and family care, and some hold influential positions within their communities. Zimbabwean women traditionally have played an important role in the management and conservation of natural resources. Their involvement can be traced through different aspects like Agriculture. They were responsible for farming, gathering, and maintaining households while also participating in trade and craft production in their communities. The women have been the primary custodians of agricultural knowledge and practices. Women were most of the time central to the social and cultural structures of their communities, for example, some ethnic groups, like the Shona and Ndebele, practice matrilineal elements where lineage and inheritance were traced through the mother's lineage. They have culturally and traditionally managed backyard gardens, cultivated crops on their lands, and preserved their seeds. These agricultural activities of theirs, not only provided food security but also ensured the sustainability of agricultural practices. The women are also concerned about water management. It is one of their responsibilities to fetch water and manage household water usage. Their cultural knowledge about local water sources and conservation methods has been of a great importance in sustaining water resources, especially in rural areas. Moreover, they have great concern for Forest Conservation. They do engaged in sustainable harvesting of forest products, for example, fruits, firewood, and medicinal plants. Such practices often included traditional knowledge about which plants to harvest and when. They also ensure that forests remained healthy and productive. Their traditional Knowledge helped them as keepers of indigenous knowledge systems which include sustainable practices in farming, herbal medicine, and food preservation. This cultural knowledge has been passed down orally, through generations and is integral to environmental sustainability.

***The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas**

Namibia is a country located in southern Africa. It has a rich and complex history which is shaped by indigenous cultures (Pre Colonial Period), European colonization (Colonial Period) and the

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

struggle for independence, (Post Independence). During the Pre-Colonial Period. The earliest inhabitants (indigenous people) of Namibia were the San people, hunter-gatherers, who lived in the region for thousands of years. It was later, Bantu-speaking groups, like the Ovambo, Herero, and Himba, migrated to the area. They involved in various trade networks, with goods such as copper, iron, and ivory being exchanged with neighboring areas. They were first colonized by the Portuguese explorers/ navigators who were the first Europeans to reach Namibia in the late 15th century, but they did not establish their settlements. In 1884, they were colonized by the German, hence, they became a German protectorate known as German South West Africa. This period witnessed the establishment of infrastructure and harsh colonial policies. This led to , the Herero and Nama peoples revoltution against German rule, leading to a brutal campaign by the Germans, which is now recognized as one of the first genocides of the 20th century, from 1904 to 1908. After the defeat of Germany in World War I, the League of Nations mandated South Africa to administer Namibia and South African rule imposed apartheid policies, segregating and oppressing the indigenous population. The South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) was formed in 1960, leading the resistance against South African rule. The SWAPO's armed wing, the People's Liberation Army of Namibia (PLAN), staged a guerrilla war for independence which was supported by The United Nations and various countries for Namibia's independence movement, by exerting pressure on South Africa. In 1978, the UN passed Resolution 435, into law, calling for free elections and Namibian independence, but it was not implemented until later and On March 21, 1990, Namibia gained independence, with Sam Nujoma, the leader of SWAPO, becoming the first president.

For the Post-Independence period, Namibia developed a multi-party democracy, whose main focus is on economic development, education, and health. But they are still faced with challenges like economic inequality and land reform. Therefore, Namibia's history reflects a journey from ancient indigenous cultures through the trials and troubles of colonization and apartheid, to the hard-won achievement of independence and the ongoing increasing effort to build a unified nation.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

***Female Fear Factory* by Pulma Gqola Dineo**

The history of South African is very rich and complex, extending from ancient times to the modern period. From the Pre-Colonial Period the region was originally inhabited by the ancient people called Khoisan, also the San (Bushmen) and Khoikhoi (Hottentots). At Around 1000 CE, Bantu-speaking peoples migrated into the region. They established different kinds of kingdoms and chiefdoms, like the Zulu, Xhosa, and Sotho-Tswana groups. During the influx of the Portuguese, ushered in the Colonial Era. The Portuguese were the first Europeans to explore the region in the late 15th century. Then came the Dutch in 1652. They established Dutch East India Company, a supply station at the Cape of Good Hope. The Company grew into the Cape Colony and this later led into the displacement and subjugation of the indigenous Khoisan people. In 1806, there began the British rule. The British took over the control of the Cape Colony. There later arise, conflicts between the British, the Dutch settlers (Boers), and the indigenous peoples. In the 19th Century (1830s and 1840s), there were many Boers that migrated (trekked) inland to escape the British rule. It led to the establishment of Boer Republics for example, the Orange Free State and the South African Republic (Transvaal).

The Zulu Kingdom, under leaders like Shaka Zulu, became a significant power, under the leaders like Shaka Zulu, leading to Zulu wars, i.e, conflicts with both the Boers and the British. Later, there was the Mineral Revolution and the discovery of diamonds in 1867 and gold 1886 which led to an influx of wealth and immigrants, further establishing British control. In Early 20th Century, there was the insurgence of Boer Wars. The First war was between 1880-1881 and the Second Boer Wars happened between 1899-1902. These wars were fought between the British and the Boer Republics. The wars resulted in British victory and the incorporation of these republics into the British Empire. In 1910, there was formation of Union of South Africa. It was formed as a dominion of the British Empire but it Unite the former British colonies and Boer republics.

The Apartheid Era was entrenched in 1948 by the National Party. The National Party came to power and formalized the policy of apartheid, a system of racial segregation and discrimination.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

This era brought about a great psychological and physical trauma for the indigenous people, leading to death and incarceration of so many people. In 1912, there was resistance from the people and this brought about the formation of The African National Congress (ANC), which was a propelling force against apartheid, with stalwart figures like Nelson Mandela coming up as a major leader. Some other organizations played important roles in the resistance like, The Pan Africanist Congress (PAC). Later, global opposition to apartheid grew, which brought about International Pressure, leading to economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation. At long last, there came an end of Apartheid in the 1980s and early 1990s, also, internal resistance and international pressure led to reforms. President F.W. de Klerk started negotiations to end apartheid. After the end of Apartheid, Nelson Mandela was released from prison in 1990 after 27 years of incarceration for the just cause of the country. Then in 1994, there was the first Democratic Election in South Africa. It was the first multiracial elections, resulting in Nelson Mandela becoming the country's first black president.

During the Post-Apartheid Era, there was constitution of New government. The new government main focus was on reconciliation, with initiatives such as, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and also addressed socio-economic disparities. Despite the constitution and reconciliation, South Africa continues to face Economic and Social challenges like economic inequality, unemployment, and crime, but it still remains one of Africa's most developed and influential nations.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

4.1. Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One: How do the selected novels present the maternal bond between women and nature

4.1.1. Women and nature as cyclical and mutually sustaining in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas, *Yellow-Yellow* by Kaine Agary and *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga

A cyclical and mutually sustaining relationship suggests that just as nature nurtures women, women also protect, cultivate, and maintain nature's cycles. These novels examine how female characters maintain good symbiotic relationship with their environment. They often take on roles of caregivers, farmers, and community builders in direct relation to their environment by exhibiting their knowledge of the land and social ecosystems which fosters sustainability. The relationship between women and nature is central to all the five selected novels on Womanhood, environment and nature. The relationship between women and nature is portrayed as cyclical and mutually sustaining. Women in the story are depicted as being deeply rooted in the natural environment, with their lives shaped by the rhythms of the land, seasons, and their connection to traditional practices. This relationship is also symbolic of the ways in which women have historically been caretakers, nurturers, and stewards of both the land and their families, often using nature as a source of strength and wisdom.

Furthermore, the novels touch on how the natural world offers both solace and struggle for women. Women find empowerment in nature, yet they also face challenges arising from the harsh realities of the environment, such as drought or poverty. Thus, nature in those novels is not just a backdrop, but an active participant in the lives of the women, reflecting their endurance, adaptability, and the complex intersections between gender and environment.

Women in the past and present have played more important roles in the economy. They have been responsible and receptive to a high degree of economic opportunities and innovations. Dating back to the Traditional African Societies, women have been playing great economic roles. There has

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

been some of them that had great outstanding achievements societally, for instance, in Nigeria, some women like Tinubu Efunsetan, Funmilayo Ransome Kuti, Onyeka Onwenu and Oby Ezekwensili, just to mention few, had made Nigeria to achieve great economic breakthroughs. Some female writers were encouraged to show case economic importance of women in the African society, through their literary works. The selected literary works take women and nature sustainability as a core theme and it is depicted through the characters and their interactions with nature.

The issues of women's empowerment and environmental sustainability are interwoven with the sociocultural challenges they face. The novels explore the complex interplay between women's empowerment and nature sustainability through the lives of various women in the selected novels. The novel, therefore, portrays empowerment and sustainability not only as individual but also as collective efforts necessary to reclaim identity, respect nature, and foster lasting change. The novel explores the challenges women face in their quest for education, autonomy, identity and empowerment in a male-dominated society as deeply intertwined with their connection to the land and environment which in turn affects their capacity to contribute fully to their society and environment. These characters suggests that the path to true empowerment involves reclaiming both women's agency and the sustainability of nature, critiquing patriarchal models of exploitation.

However, women's lack of empowerment reflects in their limited influence on decisions about land use, family resources, and sustainable practices that might benefit the community's well-being. Thus, these novels explore the intersection of women empowerment and nature sustainability through an eco-motherism perspectives by situating women's empowerment in relation to nature.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

4.1.1.2. Symbiotic relationships between women and the land

The Purple Violet of Oshaantu

The novel was set in rural Namibia. It critiques patriarchy through its portrayal of the relationship between women and nature. It represent the relationship between women and nature as cyclical and mutually sustaining that is, the cycles of seasons and life (birth, death, marriage) align with women's emotional and social development. It explores women's lives, relationships, and community values. Its setting highlights the interwoven relationship between women and nature, that is, the closeness of women to the land by emphasizing subsistence farming, water collection, and food preparation. In this novel, nature is used to mirror women's fertility cycles, communal strength, and emotional healing. The narrator, Mee Ali's garden and the descriptions of seasonal rhythms reflect the nurturing and sustaining roles women play.

The land is not just a physical space; it is a symbol of women's resilience, fertility, and strength. The title itself, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, evokes a rare and resilient flower, much like the women in the novel, who grow and endure even in the harshest of conditions.

> 'Oh, my goodness, how do I look?' Kauna' asked, flattening
> her dress with her left hand.
> ' You know you are the purple violet of Oshaantu,' I responded(26).
> The last homestead we went to was Mukwankala's. Our visit
> to her was more of a courtesy call than an invitation as she
> was an old woman. Her homestead was just as clean as she was.
> Purple and white violets grew abundantly along the fence(110).

Mee Ali's relationship with the land is described as a spiritual and intimate one. She connects with the earth, working alongside it as a source of sustenance and life. This connection contrasts with the exploitation of nature by the men in the story, highlighting a key critique of patriarchy's disregard for both women and the environment.

> Mee Ali's musings on the purple violet symbolize the parallel
> strength and beauty of women and nature:
> "Like the purple violet, women grow quietly and beautifully,
> even in the harshest conditions." (Andreas, 2001)

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

This metaphor critiques the destructive impact of patriarchal exploitation, while celebrating the quiet, enduring strength of women and nature. The resilience of the purple violet is symbolic of the quiet power of women who, like nature, continue to endure and thrive despite patriarchal control. So, the purple violet metaphorically symbolizes resilience, beauty, and rootedness as qualities found in women like Kauna and Mee Ali.

Eco-motherism Themes of Nurture, Healing, Communal Solidarity, and Land Ethics, expatiate the mutual sustainability as women draw strength and spiritual solace from nature In return, they care for and preserve the land, reflecting reciprocity. Andreas presents rural Namibian women as custodians of the land and moral order, reflecting the eco-motherist principle that women's care mirrors ecological balance.

Mee Ali, Kauna, and Mee Mekwankalaga, symbolize maternal stewardship, they cultivate the soil, manage households, and nurture communal harmony despite patriarchal oppression.

The rural landscape mirrors women's endurance: just as the land suffers from drought and neglect, women suffer from emotional, economic, and physical exploitation by men. Yet, both nature and women regenerate through care and resilience. The act of tilling the soil and growing crops becomes a metaphor for female strength and fertility, aligning with eco-motherism's celebration of women as life-givers and ecological preservers. The communal mourning and shared labour among women show that healing, both environmental and emotional, is collective, not individualistic.

Thus, the novel embodies eco-motherism through female solidarity with the land, portraying women as nurturers of both human and ecological life.

***Yellow-Yellow*,**

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

The novel was set in the oil-polluted Niger Delta, it discusses a young woman's coming-of-age story amidst environmental degradation. The protagonist, Zilayefa, is disconnected from her mother and the land due to modernization and oil exploitation. Her yearning for identity parallels the environmental decay of both woman and land as she searches for restoration and recognition. When Zilayefa got to the city, there was loss of connection in urban Port Harcourt and it symbolizes the disempowerment and disorientation of women in modern, industrialized spaces.

> I felt guilty; things were going so well for me that I had almost forgotten her Face. I had been in Port Harcourt for almost two months when my mother's Letter arrived; until then, I had not experienced the crushing loneliness I had Felt the day I first arrived (79).

Zilayefa's mother symbolises rural women and their intertwined connection to the land and traditional life. Her subsistence lifestyle mirrors a harmony with nature.

> She was able to find new farmland in another village, some who owned land they were not using would allow others to farm on it until they needed to use it.
> My mother got one such piece of land. She towed her canoe there and back everyday with unwavering determination (10).

The Niger Delta's waters symbolize feminine fertility and sustenance, but are contaminated, reflecting the violation of both nature and women. In the pre-oil society, women and nature were more harmoniously linked—dependent on fishing, farming, and water. The disruption of nature through oil spills mirrors the disempowerment and confusion Zilayefa experiences. Thus, both nature and women are both associated with fertility and productivity, yet they are treated as resources to be used rather than respected. The polluted Niger Delta represents the broken promise of fertility, (a one time life-giving, now become toxic and barren), which is similar to how women's value is often reduced to their physical appearance or reproductive role.

> I watched as the thick liquid spread out, covering more land and drowning Small animals in its path. It just kept spreading and I wondered if it would Stop, when it would stop, how far it would spread. That there was the smell. I can't describe it but it was strong- so strong it mademy head hurt and

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Turned my stomach (4).

The novel warns of the breakdown of the woman-nature cycle due to socio-economic and environmental exploitation.

Eco-motherism Themes of pollution, motherhood, and loss of ecological identity are overriding in the text. The connection between women and nature is mediated through environmental degradation and loss of purity in the Niger Delta.

The protagonist, Zilayefa (Yellow-Yellow), represents a generation alienated from both maternal and environmental roots. The oil pollution destroying her homeland parallels the corruption of feminine identity and moral values.

Her mother, Binaebi, is tied to the land and river, embodying eco-motherist nurturing, she depends on nature for sustenance and symbolizes an unpolluted, maternal ecology.

However, environmental exploitation by oil companies and social exploitation by men reflect the twin oppressions of women and nature, both are used, polluted, and abandoned.

Eco-motherism here becomes a call for reclamation: to heal the land is to restore women's dignity and moral purity. Agary therefore portrays eco-motherism as a critique of environmental injustice, showing that when nature is violated, women's identities and communities are equally wounded.

Nervous Conditions

The novel was set in colonial Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). It represents a strong bond between Women and Nature. Nature is portrayed as a quiet but constant presence in Tambu's village, where women farm and maintain domestic life. This is depicated in Tambu and other female characters with nature that all sustain and empower humanity. So, there is an explicit portrayal of women and their relationship with nature in a complex and multi-layered ways. An example is the mother of Tambu, who is a farmer.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> My mother decided to water her vegetables- rape, covo, tomatoes, derere and
> Onions- which she grew on a plot that had been my grandmother's, quite close
> To the homestead although still a quarter of an hour's walk away. We walked
> From the fields together, my mother and I, with the cattle, until we reached the
> Vegetable garden, where we parted, she to her watering, I to the homestead,
> The cattle-whip in my hand butun used because the animals were as eager to be
> Home as I was. Our shadows had already elongated thinly eastward as the sun
> Sank behind the hills. It was well past six'o clock…..(8).

In rural Zimbabwe, women are often responsible for agricultural work and the nurturing of the family. This connection to the land gives them a sense of agency and purpose. The women are often depicted as the primary caretakers of the land and the home. This role ties their fate to the sustainability of their environment.

> We would follow in the tracks if my uncle's car when the sun began to set,
> Herding the cattle back to their kraal as we went since there was no other
> Young man in our family besides Nhamo to attend to this chore. We would
> Travel as briskly as we could, so that we would not be late in preparing the
> Evening meal (8).

The novel mirrors the deep connection between women and the land in African cultures. This connection is often portrayed through the daily lives of the characters, especially the women who are involved in farming and other subsistence activities. The rural setting of the novel underscores the reliance on natural resources for survival, emphasizing a sustainable way of life that is closely tied to the environment. The rural setting of Tambu's homestead underscores the importance of land and agriculture. The family's subsistence farming lifestyle is deeply connected to the natural environment.

> My mother decided to water her vegetables -rape, covo, tomatoes,
> derere and onions – which she grew on a plot that had
> been my grandmother's, quite close to the homestead although
> still a quarter of an hour's walk away(8).

Women in the novel are depicted as the primary caretakers of the household and the land. Their knowledge of agriculture, food production, and resource management is crucial for the sustainability of their families and communities. Examples are characters like Tambu, her mother

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

and grandmother, illustrate how women are central to maintaining the household and ensuring food security, highlighting the indispensable role of women in sustainable practices. The novel touches on the importance of cultural sustainability. The preservation of indigenous knowledge, traditions, and practices is portrayed as essential for the survival of the community. Characters like Tambu's grandmother embody the transmission of cultural knowledge, emphasizing the role of women in sustaining cultural heritage.

> My grandmother, who has been an in exorable cultivator of land,
> Sower of seeds and reaper of rich harvests until, literally until, her
> Very last moment. When I was too small to be anything more than
> A hindrance in the family fields, I used to spend many productive
> Hours working with my grandmother on the plot of land she called
> Her garden (17).

Moreover, Tambu's early ambition to grow maize and fund her education shows her connection to the land as empowerment.

> My father agreed. A little seed was not a large price to pay to keep
> me quite. I began my project the next day, a day in December 1962.
> The next January my brother entered Standard One. I worked
> on the homestead, in the family fields and on my own plot. How
> I mumbled adoring, reverent prayers to my grandmother in those
> early days of my market gardening(17).

Women like Tambu's mother and aunt rely on and interact with the environment for survival and community support since there was mutual sustainability between them. Nature provides sustenance and space for female autonomy, especially in rural areas.

In conclusion, all the three novels, discuss the link between nature and women through nurturing, resilience, and cycles of renewal. However, external forces (patriarchy, modernization, colonialism) threaten this harmony and despite these challenges, the novels show that when women remain connected to nature, they find identity, strength, and continuity. Also, there is mutual sustenance between women and nature in both literal (food, water, shelter) and symbolic (identity, emotional healing, resistance).

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Eco-motherism Themes of Female Self-Reclamation, Cultural Ecology, and Resistance connects women's liberation to reconnection with natural and cultural roots. Tambu, the protagonist, begins her journey by cultivating maize, her first act of agency and independence. This portrays nature as a space of empowerment rather than servitude.

Her mother and Nyasha represent different responses to the colonial and patriarchal disconnection from nature. Tambu's mother remains tied to the land's rhythms, while Nyasha's alienation in colonial modernity leads to psychological and ecological imbalance.

The farm becomes symbolic of eco-motherist renewal, where female resilience and ecological wisdom converge. Eco-motherism is reflected in the novel's underlying idea that freedom for women requires harmony with cultural and environmental roots, not Western alienation. Thus, *Nervous Conditions* portrays eco-motherism as a philosophy of balance, where women's empowerment and environmental consciousness must coexist for holistic liberation.

Across these three novels:

Women and nature share a symbiotic identity, both are life-giving, exploited, yet regenerative. Motherhood and ecology intertwine as sources of strength, care, and identity. The authors reject Western industrial domination and affirm African communal ethics of care, respect, and sustainability. Eco-motherism thus emerges as a decolonial and feminist environmental ethic, grounding women's empowerment in the nurturing principles of the earth.

4.1.1.3. Environmental Consciousness and Ecological Identity in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu, Yellow Yellow* and *Nervous Condition*

In African literature, the relationship between people and the environment is often deeply symbolic, reflecting not only ecological awareness but also cultural identity, memory, and resistance. The three novels focuses on how the natural environment shapes the identities of female protagonists, and how awareness of environmental issues such as pollution, land degradation and cultural biases become central to their personal growth and collective well-being. This essay

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

explores the themes of environmental consciousness and ecological identity in three African novels: *Yellow-Yellow* by Kaine Agary, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas, and *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga. Using different narrative styles and settings, these novels portray the natural environment not merely as a backdrop, but as a living space that shapes and is shaped by the characters' experiences, identities, and struggles.

The Purple Violet of Oshaantu

The Purple Violet of Oshaantu presents a more subtle exploration of ecological identity. The setting is in a rural Namibian village. The novel does not deal with industrial pollution but rather portrays a community whose way of life is rooted in harmony with the land. Women like Mee Ali and Kauna rely on the environment for farming, herbal medicine, and spiritual sustenance. The narrative depicts an implicit environmental consciousness through daily routines, respect for seasonal cycles, and agricultural practices according to Andreas she writes,

> "The land, dry and cracked, waited for rain. And so did we—our lives paused until the sky wept," illustrating the intimate dependence on and respect for nature's rhythms.

Though modernization threatens to disrupt these ecological ties, the novel celebrates the resilience and adaptability of the women, who continue to embody ecological wisdom and stewardship. This is what Kauna' observed when she went to great her aunt, Mee Fannie. She was oppourtuned to follow her to her stall, where she sells food with her other co traders. Though they were in the city, they still maintain the ecological ties.

> Mee Fannie's stall stood towards the last rows of the market. Mee Fannie exchanged greetings with other vendors around her. She introduced Kauna' to her neighbours: Mevrou Kepwita, Mee Doors, Benny and Tate Kamarí. It was clear that the five enjoyed a good relationship (83).

The land in Oshaantu is both nurturing and sacred—a source of life and a space for reflection. The novel reflects deep ties to land and agricultural life in rural Namibia. The characters, especially

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

women like Mee Ali and Kauna, show sensitivity to seasonal cycles, droughts, and farming activities, which subtly implies ecological awareness. The social structure is rooted in subsistence farming, showing a community attuned to ecological rhythms and consequences of environmental change.

> 'Listen, Kauna', the rain is coming soon. It will not wait for you
> to finish ploughing and if you are not done by then, you will
> be the laughing stock of this village, not your husband or in-laws.
> It is also not fair to make the children work so hard in this heat
> while their friends are playing under the shade of the trees,'
> I said. Kauna' looked at her children, the sweat shining
> on their tiny foreheads(109).

Yellow Yellow

Yellow-Yellow presents a powerful narrative that foregrounds the ecological devastation of the Niger Delta. There is main discussion on environmental consciousness and ecological Identity in the novels. The novel centers on the ecological degradation of the Niger Delta and emphasize the impact of oil exploration. Agary highlights polluted water bodies, oil spills, and gas flaring, which devastate fishing communities and agriculture.

> And so it was that, in a single day, my mother lost her main
> source of sustenance. However, I think she had lost that land
> a long time ago, because each season yielded less than the
> season before. Not unlike the way she and others in the village
> had gradually lost, year after year, the creatures of the river to
> oil spills, acid rain, gas flares, and who knows what else,
> according to the voices on the radio(4).

Characters like Zilayefa become indirectly conscious of their loss of natural resources and cultural erosion due to corporate exploitation and government neglect.The protagonist, Zilayefa, comes of age in a region plagued by environmental degradation resulting from decades of oil exploration. The story reflects a strong environmental consciousness through vivid descriptions of oil spills, polluted rivers, gas flaring, and their devastating impacts on fishing and farming.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> A group of people, painted in the same black as my mother, some covered
> From head to toe, were marching to see the Amananaowei, the head of the
> Village. I joined them to find out what had happened. It turned out some of
> Them had also lost their farmlands that day.
> I left them and ran to my mother's farm. It was the first time I saw what
> Crude oil looked like. I watched as the thick liquid spread out, covering more
> Land and drowning small animals in its path(4)

The local people, particularly the women, are shown to suffer disproportionately as their means of livelihood and cultural traditions tied to the land are eroded. This environmental destruction serves as more than physical damage—it symbolizes the psychological and cultural dislocation of the people. Zilayefa's search for identity parallels the ecological decay around her. Her alienation from both her Ijaw heritage and her Greek father's lineage mirrors the fractured ecological identity of a people disconnected from a once-thriving land.

> As the bus pulled into the car park in Port Harcourt that sunny morning in April,
> I knew my life had changed. I was seventeen years old, and even though I had
> No idea what kind of lifelay ahead of me, the feeling that things were not going
> To be the same again made my ears red and my nose tingle as tears glazed
> my eyes (45).

The environment, thus, is intricately tied to personal and collective identity. As the author writes, "There was a time when the waters were clear and full of fish... now, all we see is slick oil on the surface," evoking a nostalgic loss of ecological integrity and selfhood.

> It felt like everything had turned to black and was spinning around me.
> There was so much oil, and we could do nothing with it, that is, viscous
> oil that would not dry out, black oil that was knee-deep. I stayed there,
> in a daze, until someone shouted at me, "You no go commit for there?
> You dey look like say na beta tin? Come on, leave dat place! " (4).

Women express a spiritual and functional bond with land through farming and herbal medicine, demonstrating an ecological identity rooted in indigenous knowledge systems. The land is seen as nurturing but also threatened not by industrialization, but by modernization and changing values.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> The day my mother's farmland was overrun by crude oil was the day her dream for me started to wither, but she carried on watering it with hope. The black oil that spilled that day swallowed my mother's crops and unravelled the threads that held together her fantasies for me(10).
> "The land, dry and cracked, waited for rain. And so did we—our lives paused until the sky wept."

There is ecological identity as the protagonist's struggle with identity parallels the environmental decay of her homeland. Zilayefa's yearning to connect with her father's side (Greek) contrasts with her alienation from her native Ijaw environment, symbolizing a fractured ecological identity.

> I did not care for him one way or another, but seeing this man thoughts of my father. Where was he? Did he ever come back to Nigeria? Did he ever think of my mother? Would I know him if I saw him? I had no clue what my father looked like. My mother had no pictures of him(19)..

The land is portrayed not only as a physical space but a cultural anchor, and its degradation mirrors the displacement of indigenous identity.

> "There was a time when the waters were clear and full of fish... now, all we see is slick oil on the surface."

Nervous Conditions

Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* approaches the environment from a different perspective. It focuses more on the psychological and cultural dimensions of ecological identity. The novel was set in colonial Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). The novel discusses the journey of Tambudzai, a young girl who navigates between her rural home and the colonial urban environment. Her life on the homestead is shaped by land-based knowledge, such as farming and domestic chores, which provide not only sustenance but also a sense of cultural continuity and personal agency. However, as Tambu transitions into the missionary school and eventually the city, she experiences a detachment from this ecological identity. The novel subtly critiques the colonial

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

disruption of indigenous relationships with the environment and reflects the loss of ecological balance. Tambu's recognition of the land as a source of empowerment.

> "I was not sorry when my brother died... I began to have ideas, to think of the land as something I could use to rise"—

Highlights her awakening not just to gender oppression but to the possibilities embedded in ecological self-reliance.

Environmental consciousness/issues are indirect in this novel but reflected through discussion on colonial displacement, urbanization, and the loss of rural self-sufficiency. Tambu's life on the homestead reflects a close relationship with the land, which provides food and a sense of order.

> September and October were different. At this time, the land was prepared for the new crop. In the beginning, people used to dig the land with hoes, which was hard work but not uncomfortable and therefore not unenjoyable. Then just before Babamukuru went to England in 1960, he brought my father an ox-plough, so that by the time I was old enough to help on the fields, the work was reduced to planting the maize in the tears that my father, or any visiting make relative who was strong enough, found time to use the ox-plough (6)

Urban spaces (mission school and city) are depicted as disconnected from nature, embodying colonial and patriarchal disruption.

> Even Natasha returned to her normal irrepressible self which was a relief to me but taxed Babamukuru 's nerves badly. He preferred race and quiet, but when he tried to make Natasha peaceful and quiet they always ended up on a rough and noisy quarrel. Natasha did not mind these rows because, she said, they cleared the air and allowed her and her father to understand each other better, since without the confrontation and the hurling at each other of deep-felt grievances, they would never communicate at all(157).

Ecological identity is depicated in Tambu's identity and is strongly shaped by the land-based knowledge of her rural upbringing as she plants maize, helps with chores, and understands survival in harmony with nature.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> When I was too small to be anything more than a hindrance in the family fields, I used to spend many productive hours working with my grandmother on the plot of land she called her garden. We hoed side by side strips of land defined by the row of maize plants each carried, I obstinately insisting I could keep pace with her, she weeding three strips to my one so that I could. Praising my predisposition towards working, she consolidated it in me as a desirable habit(17).

As she moves into urban education, there's a detachment from ecological identity, mirroring the cultural dislocation experienced under colonialism.

> "I was not sorry when my brother died... I began to have ideas, to think of the land as something I could use to rise."

Agary's novel deals directly with oil pollution and its effect on the protagonist's identity, while Andreas and Dangarembga subtly connect women's self-awareness to their physical and ecological surroundings. Therefore, these novels, environmental consciousness emerges in different degrees ranging from the explicit ecological disaster of *Yellow-Yellow,* to the agrarian sensitivity in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* and the cultural-ecological dislocation in *Nervous Conditions.* Ecological identity is shown as deeply entwined with cultural belonging, gender roles, and postcolonial experiences. Across these three novels, the theme of environmental consciousness is presented with varying intensity. In *Yellow-Yellow*, it is a central, urgent concern framed through ecological disaster and exploitation. In *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* it appears more quietly, through the rhythms of rural life and the wisdom of women. In *Nervous Conditions*, it is part of a broader commentary on colonialism, gender, and education, where ecological identity is gradually lost or transformed. What unites all three texts is the portrayal of the environment as integral to identity, cultural, personal, and political. The land is not a passive space but a dynamic force that shapes and reflects human experiences.

In conclusion, African women writers such as Agary, Andreas, and Dangarembga present a rich tapestry of ecological thought in their works. Their novels challenge readers to recognize the deep interconnections between environmental health, cultural survival, and personal identity. As

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

environmental degradation, climate change, and displacement continue to affect communities globally, these literary works remain vital in cultivating awareness and inspiring action rooted in both ecological consciousness and cultural integrity.

4.1.1.4. Nature as a Space for Healing and Renewal *Woman at Point Zero, The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and *Nervous Condition*

In *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas, *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga. In each of the novels, there is exploration of how natural spaces such as gardens, rivers, fields all symbolize emotional and psychological refuge for women, offering healing from trauma and a pathway toward self-reclamation. Nature serves as a place of reflection and healing, offering moments of peace, clarity, or emotional escape from oppressive environments.

In African feminist literature, nature often transcends its physical presence, and become a symbolic terrain through which women confront trauma, assert agency, and seek restoration. In the novels, *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas, and *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga, nature serves varying roles, by reflecting women's fractured or fulfilled relationships with themselves, their communities, and their oppressors. The novels explore how each author presents nature as a space for healing and renewal, highlighting its significance in female identity formation and resistance.

Nature as Healing/Renewal: In *Woman at Point Zero*, El Saadawi intentionally portrays a bleak, almost barren narrative landscape to mirror Firdaus' alienation from natural life and emotional restoration. The novel is set in the oppressive, patriarchal environment of Egyptian, in Cairo urban slums and the prison where Firdaus is incarcerated.

> The prison doctor said he would take me to see her and show me other women prisoners who suffered from mental afflictions. Through him, I was enabled to obtain a special permit to visit Qanatir Prison as a psychiatrist and to examine the women(x).

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Firdaus' world is devoid of sustained interaction with nature. She always withdrawn to herself. Seeing no need to interact with anybody.

> 'You will never meet anyone like her in or out of prison. She refuses all visitors, and won't speak to anyone. She usually leaves her food untouched, and remains wide awake until dawn. Sometimes the prison warder observed her as she sits staring vacantly into space for hours(3).

There is garden metaphor in her early life in association with gardens and trees with a sense of peace and safety, that is, memories of playing under a tree with her uncle. The few instances where nature appears—such as the scent of orange blossoms or memories of sitting under trees in her childhood—are fleeting and nostalgic, underscoring a once-possible connection to peace that is now irretrievably lost. Nature is largely absent or symbolic in the novel, reflecting Firdaus' lack of access to healing spaces of nature's temporary comfort. She finds solace in the scent of orange blossoms or the quiet of the countryside, which offer fleeting moments of renewal.

> The waters if the river reflected the green of the trees, and flowed by as green as her eyes. The sky over our heads was as blue as the bluest sky, but the colours mingled and everything around radiated this liquid green light which surrounded me, enveloped me completely, so that I felt myself gradually drowning in it(69).

There is loss of natural connection in the sense that her life becomes increasingly confined and artificial , which is, city, office, brothel, and prison symbolizing how oppression alienates women from nature and, by extension, healing. The absence of her sustained interaction with nature parallels the denial of freedom and autonomy. Nature becomes an imagined or nostalgic space rather than an accessible one.

> It was strange, this sensation of drowning in the dark green in a dark green with a density of its own, a consistency of its own, like the feel of water in the sea, a sea in which I was sleeping, and dreaming, in which I was sinking as I slept and dreamt, in which I was gradually sinking without getting wet, gradually dropping without getting drowned(69).

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

These glimpses act as metaphors for freedom and innocence, both brutally stripped from her as she endures abuse, exploitation, and institutional abandonment. Nature is not a sanctuary Firdaus can return to, but a lost ideal that contrasts with the artificial and harsh environments she inhabits. Through this, El Saadawi critiques a patriarchal and capitalist society that severs women from both nature and themselves.

Conversely, Neshani Andreas in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* weaves nature intimately into the everyday lives of her characters, using it as a literal and metaphorical site of healing, strength, and resilience. She presents nature as a source of healing and renewal. The novel is set in rural Namibia, where nature plays a prominent and active role in the lives of the characters, especially women. The novel highlights how women like Mee Ali and Kauna engage with the land through farming, gardening, and herbal remedies. They cultivate crops, and rely on the land, reinforcing a connection with nature that brings routine, meaning, and survival.

> It is that time of the year again. The season when our village,
> Oshaantu, camouflages itself in a rich green carpet and
> provides a breathtaking sight, especially from our homestead,
> which is built on an incline. I wish time would stand still.
> We had good rains this year and are promised plenty to eat.
> My heart is full of gratitude as I look at all the onahangu, sorghum,
> spinach, beans, pumpkins, watermelons, nuts, corn and cabbage
> Those of us who worked extra moke will not have to buy tomatoes,
> onions, sweet potatoes, and guava for a good while(1).

This symbolize the natural rhythms of the cyclical nature of farming and mirrors women's lives like hardship, endurance, and growth. These activities are not only means of subsistence but also embodiments of feminine endurance and community. The purple violet flower, which gives the novel its title, symbolizes female friendship, resilience, and renewal.

> Mee Ali's musings on the purple violet symbolize the parallel
> strength and beauty of women and nature:
> "Like the purple violet, women grow quietly and beautifully,
> even in the harshest conditions." (Andreas, 2001)

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

The plant's delicate yet persistent nature mirrors the inner strength of women like Mee Ali and Kauna. quiet beauty and persistence—characteristics mirrored in the female friendships that sustain emotional recovery amidst domestic violence and gendered expectations.

> We became inseparable. My husband, sensing the bond of friendship
> Between us, named our daughter after Karina. It was a pleasant surprise (16).
> "We sat in silence, but it was the kind of silence that speaks more than words
> ever could."
> The women understood Kauna's situation. There was a wonderful spirit,
> spirit of sisterhood. For once, all ill-feeling and hate were forgotten.
> We were one again, sisters sharing a common cause (116).

In this environment, nature is not distant or lost but a living partner in women's journeys toward renewal. Andreas thus positions rural, agrarian life as a counterpoint to patriarchal oppression, by providing a space where solidarity among women can flourish, away from the harshness of male dominance in domestic spaces. She highlights how cultural rootedness and natural cycles offer spaces for spiritual and emotional reclamation. An example is when the women assisted Kauna' in the *okakungungun.*

> 'Oh....' I said, widening my eyes, acting shocked. She laughed. I had
> never seen Kauna in such a relaxed and happy mood. I stood still
> to embrace this rare mood. I always thought she had an innocent beauty. (115)

Nature offers spiritual and communal healing in contrast to the trauma many women endure within their homes. It's a site of quiet resistance and survival.

Similarly, in *Nervous Conditions,* set in colonial Zimbabwe (then Rhodesia), with shifts between rural and missionary school settings. Dangarembga employs nature as a space of reflection and resistance, especially through the character of Tambu. Her rural homestead, particularly the garden she cultivates, becomes a space of self-determination, self-sufficiency, identity, and pride. When she grows and sells maize, it is a moment of empowerment.

My mother did not need the whole of it, so that half an acre or so lay fallow. Thus was the plot I chose for my field.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> That year I grew older, stronger and sturdier than any eight year old can usefully grow. More often than not, I woke up before dawn, the first lifting of the darkness occuring while I was sweeping the yard. Before it was fully light, I would be on my way to the river and then returning along the foothill through the trees and past other homesteads, where the women were just waking, my water-drum balanced on my head-pad of leaves and green twigs(20).

Tambu's pride in growing and selling maize symbolizes a brief but significant assertion of agency, especially in a family and society where female voices are often silenced. One of her teachers, Mr Matimba, encouraged her to sell the green maize when fully natured and green, that she will make money.

> I talked to him as though he were just another person and not an adult and a teacher. I felt myself recoalesce.
> 'You would do better to sell them green,' Mr Matimba suggested when I had finished. 'It would fetch you more money.'
> 'But everybody has green maize to eat,' I objected. 'Ho-o-o! You are saying I should go to the bus-stop?'
> 'That is possible,' answered Mr Matimba, 'but I was thinking that you sell to the Whites. When the cops re fat and heavy, they buy them for as much as sixpence each.'
> I did not believe him. Nobody had that much money, not even Babamukuru (24).

While the mission school introduces her to education and social mobility, it also represents a disruption of the natural rhythms of her life and a site of psychological dislocation.

> At Babamukuru's I would have the leisure, be encouraged to consider questions that had to do with survival of the spirit, the creation of consciousness, rather than mere sustenance of the body. This new me would not be enervated by smoky kitchens that left eyes smarting and chest permanently. Nor would there be trips to Nyamarira, Nyamarira which I loved to bathe in and watch cascade through the narrow outlet of the fall where we drew our water. The point was this: I was going to be developed in the way that Babamukuru saw fit, which in the language I understood at the time meant well(59).

Nature, in Tambu's memory and reflection, becomes a source of rootedness that she must negotiate as she navigates colonial and patriarchal pressures..

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> It was evident from the corrugated black callouses on my knees, the scales on my skin that were due to lack of oil, the short, dull Tufts of malnourished hair. This was the person I was leaving behind. At Babamukuru's I was expected to find another self, clean, well groomed, genteel self who could not have survived, on the homestead (58-59).

Nature in the village is associated with roots, tradition, and maternal bonds, while the mission and boarding school are structured and controlling. For Nyasha, nature's absence in the colonized, westernized world she inhabits in the mission compound and her London upbringing contributes to her mental disintegration.

> The noise brought Babamukuru and Maiguru running. They could do nothing, could only watch. Natasha was beside herself with furt. She rampaged, shredding her history book between her teeth ('Their history. Fucking liars. Their bloody lies.'), breaking her clay pots, anything she could lay her hands on and jabbing the fragments viciously into her flesh, stripping the bedclothes, tearing her clothes from the wardrobe and trampling them underfoot(205).

Dangarembga suggests that disconnection from the natural and cultural environment contributes to spiritual and psychological fragmentation.

> There were many practical issues about my transplantation that I had to think about, all of them mixed up with each other and needing to be sorted out into discreet, manageable portions (59).

Tambu often reflects while in natural surroundings as moments of insight and self-awareness arise in outdoor scenes. Metaphorically, river and earth are used to express psychological depth and emotional states, e.g., Nyasha's disintegration is tied to the loss of balance between mind, body, and the natural rhythm.

The main Idea in this novel is that nature serves as a reclaiming space for identity and healing. It counters the alienation imposed by colonial and patriarchal systems.

Comparatively, all three novels acknowledge the profound impact of sociopolitical forces of patriarchy, colonialism, and capitalism—on women's access to natural spaces and their symbolic implications. In *Woman at Point Zero*, nature is largely symbolic of what has been denied and

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

nature potency of healing and renewal is fleeting or imagined. In *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* it is an active agent of renewal and central to daily life. In terms of nature as healing and renewal, it is tangible and symbolic of purple violet flower which nature founds sanctuary for in the hands of patriarchy and in *Nervous Conditions,* it is a complex site of both empowerment and tension. What unites these portrayals is the recognition that nature, when accessible, holds potential for healing and reconnection, especially for women who face compounded forms of oppression.

In conclusion, nature in African women's writing is more than a backdrop, it is a contested and vital space that reflects the psychological, social, and emotional states of female characters. El Saadawi, Andreas, and Dangarembga use nature to interrogate how gender, geography, and power intersect in the lives of African women. Whether absent, nurturing, or ambivalent, nature in these texts becomes a mirror of female suffering and strength, loss and hope, silence and voice. Through their respective treatments of nature, these authors reveal its potential as a site of renewal in women's ongoing struggles for identity, dignity, and liberation.

4.1.1.5. The Interconnectedness of Land, Culture, and Gender Roles in African Women's Literature and Feminist Discourse

The African landscape which is both literal and symbolic has long being a site of negotiation for identity, power, and gendered experience. In African women's writing and feminist theory, the relationship between land, culture, and gender roles is especially profound, discussing how women's identities are shaped, constrained, and sometimes liberated through their interactions with place and tradition. This essay explores the interconnectedness of land, culture, and gender roles in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas, *Yellow-Yellow* by Kaine Agary, and *Female Fear Factory* by Pumla Dineo Gqola. These texts reflect different approaches like fictional narratives and feminist analysis but all underscore how space, tradition, and patriarchal systems intersect to influence women's lived realities.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Interconnectedness of Land, Culture, and Gender Roles *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu, Yellow Yellow,* and *Female Fear Factory*

These novels, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas, *Yellow-Yellow* by Kaine Agary and *Female Fear Factory* by Pumla Dineo Gqola, all analyze the cultural importance of land and how women's traditional roles connect them deeply to sustainable practices, rituals, and the transmission of ecological knowledge. All these texts address how cultural expectations and traditional roles shape women's relationship with the land and sustainability, often linking gender identity with ecological stewardship.

In *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* Neshani Andreas presents a rural Namibian setting where land is central to both survival, that is source of livelihood, inheritance, social status. and social identity. Women work actively by engaging in agricultural work, tilling land diligently, contributing significantly to the community's sustenance. However, despite their labor, they are excluded from land ownership. An example is when Kauna was leaving the village after the death and burial of Shange because her inlaws never allowed her to have any of her husband's inheritance.

> What will the Shanges do with Kauna? Will they take everything away from her too? Will they kick her off the land? If they don't think about Kauna, will they think about the children? ..... I cannot imagine that they will throw her off the land, the land she loved and worked so hard on. The land that helped her to raise her children. The land she talked to so many times. The land she has shed tears and sweat on?...(108).
>
> On the day she prepared to leave Oshaantu...the Shange family observed everything from the sidelines, making critical remarks and gossiping. That had 'won' in that they had the homestead....
>
> I tried to be strong for my friend Kauna and her family. They looked like people who were going away for a weekend, they had so little luggage (173).

Land rights and inheritance are mediated by male lineage, reflecting deeply ingrained cultural norms that prioritize men's authority. Culture in this context dictates not only property rights but

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

also interpersonal dynamics, particularly in marriage and community roles. Women are expected to be submissive wives and caretakers, that is, caregivers, homemakers, and subordinate to men with little room for autonomy.

> My child, my child, it was the whole bunch, the Changes. The brothers,
> Cousins, nephews , uncle's, grandfathers, you name them. They were
> All there, old and young. They were fighting over cattle. Some animals
> Were already being driven away.
> ' I couldn't see exactly who drove the cattle away and how many were
> being driven away. But I know it was the Shanges, the whole lot
> ' " That is my bull, that is my bull, yeyeyeye, yeyeyeye....."
> ' " No, that is not your bull...."
> ' " Yes, it is my bull. *Nakusa* promised me this bull. Ask Mee Kauna,
> she knows everything (40).

Yet, through the powerful bond between women like Mee Ali and Kauna, Andreas reveals subtle resistances to these norms. Female friendships become a cultural subversion that is, a way to reclaim emotional agency and carve out spaces of dignity. During the *okakungungun* on Kauna's farm, the women worked with one team spirit

> We worked and worked.
> We worked with one spirit.
> We worked as if we completed for a prize.
> We sang in harmony.
> We sang all kinds of songs:
> Songs of our ancestors,
> Songs of sorrow,
> Songs of forgiveness,
> When we did not sing, the omatemos did.
> 'We called on our ancestors, our great grandmothers, one of
> the women called and the rest of us confirmed (115).

The land, although unequally shared, becomes a site of resilience. This interconnectedness demonstrates how cultural customs and land distribution reinforce gender roles, yet also become arenas for quiet resistance and solidarity among women.

In contrast, Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* is set in the oil-rich but environmentally devastated Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Land is not a source of stability but a landscape of loss. Oil exploration

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

and exploitation by multinational corporations has rendered the land infertile and polluted, disrupting traditional life and economic independence.

> A group of people, painted in the same black as my mother, some covered from head to toe, were marching to see the Amananaowei, the head of the village. It turned out some of them had also lost their farmland that day. They were marching to the Amananaowei's house to report the matter and demand that he take it up with the oil company. Some were crying; others were talking about compensation (4).

This environmental degradation parallels a cultural erosion, that is, culture is fractured between traditional beliefs and the influence of Western consumerism. This is an identity crisis for communities whose connection to land is spiritual, ancestral, and practical. For the protagonist Zilayefa, a biracial girl caught between worlds, the land's degradation mirrors her internal dislocation. She navigates this tension as a biracial girl seeking belonging in a polluted, culturally dislocated environment.

> I quietly begged God to include an escape from the village in my plan. " I just want to go and try my luck and see if maybe I can find work somewhere." Clearly, I had no definite plans (43).

The traditional cultural values upheld by her mother are in tension with the consumerist, patriarchal values of modern urban life.

> Farming and fishing, the occupations that had sustained my mother, her mother, and her mother's mother no longer provided gain. I had witnessed lands claimed by massive floods during the raining season,the earth slowly melting into the rivers. Women towed their canoes farther and farther away to find land for farming. In addition, every year it was harder to catch fish, as though the water spirits hd tied the fishes' wombs, until people barely bothered to cast their nets(39).

Gender roles in this setting are fraught because women are increasingly commodified, particularly in the urban, oil-rich regions with relationships often transactional in nature due to economic pressures. Mothers and older women attempt to uphold traditional values, but younger women face

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

conflicting expectations around purity, economic survival, and modern identity. Zilayefa herself struggles with sexual agency and moral expectations. The loss of land thus signals a broader collapse of cultural continuity and feminine empowerment, leaving women vulnerable. Agary shows that environmental, cultural, and gendered disempowerment and exploitation are deeply intertwined. There are parallels ecological exploitation in both. The violation of the land is similitude to the people, particularly women whose roles were historically tied to that land because both the land and the female body are treated as resources to be consumed and discarded.

Pumla Dineo Gqola's *Female Fear Factory,* though non-fiction, provides a powerful insight for understanding how land and culture operate as tools of patriarchal control. Gqola argues that fear is manufactured and circulated through cultural messages that teach women of spatial politics, that they should fear public and private spaces. The Land (space) becomes metaphorical for control and visibility. Women are disciplined through fear to restrict their movement. Fear is used as a cultural tool to normalize violence and reinforce submission.. The "female fear factory" is a system that disciplines women's behavior by policing their movement and presence. In this context, land or space, whether a street, a home, or a workplace, is not neutral. It is politicized and gendered.

Gqola critiques how society constructs femininity through compliance, silence, and fear. Women are told where they can go, how they should behave, and what they should wear—all under the threat of violence or shame. Women are taught to expect violence, and culture is used to justify these roles. Cultural norms become the machinery through which this control is legitimized. Gender roles, as Gqola demonstrates, are not just about expectations but about surveillance, fear, and power. The interconnectedness of space, culture, and gender roles in her analysis shows how systemic violence is embedded in everyday life, and how women's spatial freedom is curtailed as part of broader cultural programming.

When viewed together, these three texts offer a multifaceted examination of how land, culture, and gender roles are co-constructed and co-dependent. In *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, land is worked by women but owned by men—reflecting cultural values that frame women as

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

subordinate. In *Yellow-Yellow,* the physical destruction of land represents the symbolic destruction of culture, displacing traditional gender roles and rendering women more vulnerable to exploitation. In *Female Fear Factory,* land and space become instruments of cultural fear, used to enforce gender roles and maintain male dominance. Across all texts, there is a common theme: land is not just territory; it is a marker of identity, power, and gendered experience. Culture, while often a source of community and belonging, can be a double-edged sword—simultaneously offering structure and reinforcing inequality.

Yet, all three works also reveal avenues for resistance. In *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* female solidarity reclaims emotional space. In *Yellow-Yellow,* the protagonist's journey reflects the struggle for self-definition amid chaos. In *Female Fear Factory*, Gqola calls for the dismantling of fear as a tool of control, urging feminist resistance in both thought and practice. These acts of resistance highlight that while land, culture, and gender roles may be tightly intertwined, they are not immutable. They can be questioned, contested, and reshaped.

In conclusion, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu, Yellow-Yellow*, and *Female Fear Factory* collectively illustrate that the interconnectedness of land, culture, and gender roles is a powerful lens through which to examine African women's experiences. Whether through fictional narratives or feminist theory, these works challenge the reader to reconsider how space, tradition, and identity intersect—and how women can navigate, resist, and transform these intersections in their quest for dignity and autonomy.

4.1.1.6. Nature and Female Resilience in the Face of Displacement or Crisis; *Woman at Point Zero, Yellow Yellow and Nervous Conditions*

In theses novels, *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi, *Yellow-Yellow* by Kaine Agary, and *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga delves into how women draw strength from nature personally, socially, or ecologically, using nature as a metaphor or resource for survival, adaptation, and resistance to disempowerment. Each protagonist navigates various crises psychologically,

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

physically, or socially and draw on a symbolic or literal connection to nature as a foundation for resilience. Notes on Nature and Female Resilience in the Face of Displacement or Crisis In theses novels, *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi, *Yellow-Yellow* by Kaine Agary, and *Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga**.**

In African feminist literature, nature often acts as both a mirror of women's inner turmoil and a backdrop against which their struggles and resilience unfold. Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero,* Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow,* and Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* each explore how women's relationships with nature, place, and the self are disrupted by various forms of crisis—emotional, social, and cultural. Yet, amid these displacements, the protagonists demonstrate remarkable resilience. Through different stylistic and thematic lenses, these novels articulate a deeply rooted feminist consciousness that connects environmental, psychological, and sociopolitical crises to the lived experiences of African women.

In *Woman at Point Zero*, the Egyptian writer Nawal El Saadawi presents a stark, and often bleak, mirroring the oppressive conditions Firdaus endures. The urban landscape (Cairo) becomes a symbol of alienation, abuse, and control, showing the loss of harmony between woman and nature, devoid of nourishing or natural elements. The city becomes a hostile space of control and subjugation, representing the broader social and institutional forces that silence and abuse women.

> I felt rejected, not only by him, not only by one person amongst the millions that peopled the vast world, but by every living being or thing on earth, by the vast world itself (7).

Firdaus, the protagonist, is emotionally displaced from childhood through abuse, betrayed, and denial of access to education. Her life is shaped by patriarchal violence, which distances her from any harmonious relationship with nature or community.

> I was trembling all over, seized with a feeling I could not explain, that My uncle's great long fingers would draw close to me after a little while, and cautiously lift the eiderdown under which I lay. Then his lips would touch my face and press down on my

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> mouth, and his trembling fingers would feel their way slowly upwards over my tight(28).

Yet, her resilience emerges powerfully in the final chapters, where she reclaims agency by narrating her story from prison and choosing death on her own terms. Firdaus's act of storytelling is both a resistance against the oppressive forces that shaped her life and a radical assertion of female autonomy.

> The woman sitting on the ground in front of me was a real woman. The voice filling my ears with its sound, echoing in the cell where the window and the door were tightly closed was a real voice. And I was certainly awake. For suddenly the door was thrown open, revealing several armed policeman. They surrounded her in a circle, and I heard one of them say:
> 'Let's go.....Your time has come.'
> I saw her walk out with them.
> I never saw her again. But her voice continued to echo in my ears, vibrating in my head, in the cell, in the prison, in the streets, in the whole world (142).

In this text, nature is almost entirely absent, emphasizing how disconnected women become from life and vitality under extreme systemic oppression. Her reclaiming of voice in prison (through narration) is symbolic of resistance and identity restoration.

> Let me speak. Do not interrupt me. I have no time to listen to you. They are coming to take me at six o'clock this evening. Tomorrow morning, I shall no longer be here. Nor will I be in any place known to man. This journey to a place unknown to everybody on this earth fills me with pride(13).

Firdaus experiences social, sexual, and economic displacement. Each crisis she faces such as rape, betrayal, incarceration all triggers a new layer of resilience, culminating in defiant self-awareness.

In contrast, Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow* situates nature centrally, using the polluted landscape of the Niger Delta as both a literal and symbolic representation of displacement. The Niger Delta's polluted environment serves as a metaphor for the corruption and confusion in Zilayefa, the protagonist life. The once fertile and beautiful region is degraded, paralleling her struggle with

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

self-worth and identity as a biracial girl and grows up in a rural community by the river. Her longing to know her absent white father parallels her community's longing for economic justice in the face of environmental degradation caused by oil exploitation.

> A group of people, painted in the same black as my mother, some covered from head to toe, were marching to see the Amananaowei, the head of the village. It turned out some of them had also lost their farmland that day. They were marching to the Amananaowei's house to report the matter and demand that he take it up with the oil company. Some were crying; others were talking about compensation (4).

The river, symbolizes transition, uncertainty, and a space of constant change. once a symbol of life, becomes tainted—mirroring the confusion and loss that define Zilayefa's coming-of-age journey. Her displacement is both environmental and psychological, as she transitions from the safety of her mother's world to the exploitative urban terrain of Port Harcourt that exposes her to new forms of social and moral crisis. Despite falling into temporary illusions of safety through relationships with men, Zilayefa ultimately cultivates a quiet but determined resilience. Her resilience is internal and reflective. She evolves from a naive girl into a more self-aware woman, navigating the complexities of urban life, male manipulation, and the search for paternal identity.

> While I was talking, I noticed man across the room. I don't know how I missed him before, because his complexion stood out just as mine did in that room. His skin was the colour of ripe plantain peel. His hair was black and had the same big waves as my own. I had been staring at him for much longer than was comfortable, so he smiled at me and I smiled back. I wondered if he was Greek....but seeing this man brought me thoughts of my father. Where was he? Did he ever come back to Nigeria? Did he ever think of my mother? Would I know him if I saw him? I had no clue what my father looked like. My mother had no pictures of him, and it did not help that, aside from my complexion (19-20).

Her ability to question her reality and resist becoming like other exploited women around her shows her inner strength.

> His intention was to soothe me with comforting, sensible words, but I could not see the sense. This was often the case when my

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> father spoke, but there had not before been such concrete cause to question his theories. This time, though, I had evidence. Maiguru was educated, and did she serve Babamukuru books for dinner? I discovered to my unhappy relief that my father was not sensible (16)

She was able to self-reflect and withdraw from toxic dependencies which marks her growth and evolving strength.

> I was afraid to leave the comfort of all that I had known for seventeen years to start life in a new place without my mother, who had been my protector, my shield, and who would have been, if she could breathe for me, my life support. Nevertheless, the desire to start a new life far outweighed any fears I had(41).

This shows nature is a vital metaphor for personal and communal disruption but also a space where awareness and resistance begin.

Binaebi a, representation of the women in her village, empowers herself by providing the means of sustenance for herself and her daughter in *Yellow Yellow*, by Kaine Agary,

> She would make sure that I accomplished what she had not. She had inherited a small piece of land from her family, which she farmed, and sometimes she would go fishing. With the proceeds, she was able to feed us and pay my school fees. She took care of all my needs and even went without sometimes to make sure that I got an education (8).

Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* introduces a more complex interplay between nature, culture, and identity. Tambu, the novel's protagonist, is rooted in a rural Zimbabwean village that symbolizes both tradition and restriction.

The rural homestead that is the mission and village signifies tradition, continuity, and groundedness, though not always safety for women. In contrast with urban or mission life, nature becomes a site of both oppression because of patriarchy and origin of where resilience is formed. Tambu resists traditional gender roles by fighting for her education. Her resilience is intellectual and emotional.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> Thus began the period of my reincarnation. I liked to think of my transfer to the mission as my reincarnation. With the egotistical faith of fourteen short years, during which my life had progressed very much according to plan, I expected this era to be significantly profound and broadening in terms of adding wisdom to my nature, clarity to my vision, glamour to my person(94).

Her journey toward education and self-liberation is framed by the tension between the pastoral world of her upbringing and the Westernized, patriarchal world of the mission. Nature, in this context, is not purely idyllic; it holds cultural weight, reinforcing gender roles that Tambu seeks to escape. Meanwhile, Nyasha, Tambu's cousin, embodies the psychological crisis of cultural displacement.

Nyasha, raised in England and returned to Zimbabwe, suffers cultural alienation, leading to anorexia and mental breakdown, showing the deep crisis of identity in postcolonial contexts.

> 'It happens,' she assured me. 'You get so comfortable and used to the way things are. Look at me now. I was comfortable in England but now I'm a whore with dirty habits.'
> 'But Nyash,' I began.
> 'I know,' she interrupted. 'It's not England any more and I ought to adjust. But when you've seen different things you want to be sure you're adjusting to the right thing. You can't go on all the time being whatever's necessary(119).

Her rebellion, eating disorder, and eventual breakdown reflect the psychological cost of double displacement which is between cultures and genders, violence of colonialism and patriarchy.

> I worried about the effect the situation was having on my cousin. Not only had she stopped talking to us, but she was growing vague and detaching herself from us. She was retreating into some private world that we could not reach. Sometimes, when I talked to her, quite apart from preferring not to answer, she simply did not hear me. Once, when I passed my hand in front of her eyes, she did not see me either and I had to shout very loudly to bring her back (120).

Though Tambu appears more composed and adaptive, she experiences cultural and gender displacement as she is torn between tradition and modernity. Both girls grapple with the deep fissures caused by conflicting cultural identities. Resilience in *Nervous Conditions* is presented as intellectual and emotional survival—seen in Tambu's eventual rejection of silence and passivity.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Across all three novels, female resilience takes varied forms: *Yellow-Yellow* uses ecological degradation to mirror emotional confusion, *Woman at Point Zero* uses urban decay to reflect moral and societal decay while *Nervous Conditions* juxtaposes rural simplicity with oppressive patriarchal systems. They discusses different types of resilience experienced by each protagonist. Firdaus exhibits radical and existential resilience, Zilayefa shows quiet and emerging resilience whileTambu and Nyasha show intellectual and psychological resilience with different outcomes which always stems from the protagonists' confrontation with displacement. Whether that displacement is from land, body, or culture, these women find ways to resist, survive, and even redefine themselves.

Importantly, nature plays different roles across the texts: absent and sterile in Woman at Point Zero, corrupted and metaphorically rich in Yellow-Yellow, and symbolically traditional in Nervous Conditions. These representations reinforce the notion that women's connection to their environment is profoundly shaped by social and historical forces—and that reclaiming this connection is often part of their journey toward empowerment.

Ultimately, El Saadawi, Agary, and Dangarembga offer feminist narratives that interweave ecological, emotional, and existential displacements to highlight the endurance of African women. By drawing attention to both the environments they inhabit and the psychological landscapes they navigate, these novels offer a compelling portrait of resilience as a form of resistance and self-realization.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

4.1.1.7. Nature as a Symbol of Female Vitality and Resistance

Yellow Yellow

Zilayefa's journey mirrors a struggle for self-definition in a world that commodifies both female bodies and natural resources.

> Since I arrived in Port Harcourt, I had been too busy to think of having a boyfriend. I shared my twenty-four hours between work, Lolo, Sisi, and, occasion art, my books. This may have been why I did not take Men's warnings too seriously. I could not imagine where I would find time to carry on a relationship with anyone (129).

Her gradual awakening similar to the ecofeminist call for reclaiming agency and resisting systems that reduce both women and nature to objects of control.

Ultimately, the novel, *Yellow-Yellow* contributes meaningfully to African ecofeminist literature by expanciating on how gender, ecology, and postcoloniality intersect in everyday live experiences. Agary's work echoes the voices of marginalized women and also gives voice to a wounded landscape by asserting that healing for one cannot occur without healing for the other. This is metaphorically explained when Zilayefa aborted the pregnancy, which she is not really sure of it's paternity. This indicates that, the female are ready to assert their rights and reject double oppression of colonialism and post colonialism i.e of Sergio and Admiral;

> I could not bring Sergio's child into my world. I could not allow him a place in my heart. That would be foolish(173). I could not deal with trying to explain to my child that it's father was a nice white man who offered me no security or maybe that it's father was the man on network news every month discussing the Niger Delta(174).
> I soon started looking for plants that resembled the ones girls in the village claimed we're used to "wash out" *belle.* I returned to my room later and chew up the plants I had picked, leaf and bark together. Some were so bitter I had to force them down with water(177).
> I felt near the end when the cramps woke me up later that night. I managed to crawl to the bathroom. I lay curled up in the foetal position on the cold tile floor until my sweat and the blood that gushed from between my legs drenched my clothes(178).

Woman at Point Zero

In *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawaal Elshadawi Firdaus also strives to have autonomy at so many times from the oppressive circumstances she found herself. Once in an abusive relationship with Sheikh Mahmoud,

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> One day he hit me with his heavy stick until the blood ran from my nose and ears. So I left, but this time I did not go to my uncle's house. I walked through the streets with swollen eyes, and a bruised face(60).

Another time, she wanted autonomy when she found herself as a domestic sex worker while living with Bayoumi.

> I ran out of Bayoumi's house into the street. For the street had become the only safe place in which I could seek refuge, and into which I could escape with my whole being. As I ran, I looked back over my shoulder now and again to make sure that Bayoumi was not following me(68).

Another instance is when she left Sharifa's house, (the woman that introduced her to prostitution work).

> I tiptoed back to my room, put on the first dress I could lay my hands on, took my little bag, and hurried down the flights of stairs into the street (82).

El Saadawi critiques systems that objectify both women and nature. It also reveals a shared capacity for renewal and resistance. In doing so, she not only tells Firdaus's story but offers a broader feminist indictment of structural violence against women and the environment. She presents the relationship between women and nature as complex and symbolic. It reflects ecofeminist themes of oppression, survival, and resistance by drawing similarities between the exploitation of natural resources and the commodification of the female body. Firdaus' body becomes a site of transactional value, regulated by men through sexual, economic, and institutional mechanisms—just as nature is exploited for profit and control. Yet, nature in the novel also symbolizes an ungovernable realm—an element beyond patriarchal reach. Firdaus's refusal to repent and reclaiming of her narrative at the novel's end signals a return to this natural self: a body and voice no longer owned by others.

Moreover she constructs a poignant metaphorical relationship between women and nature. It is a powerful portrayal of the intersections of gender, environment, and resistance in the context of

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Egyptian society. It reveals how both of them are subjected to patriarchal control, yet retain the potential for resistance. Nature is intermittently portrayed as a space of clarity and truth, by viewing from Firdaus's experiences, and offers rare moments of escape from societal oppression. For example, simple acts like walking alone under the night sky or feeling the wind on her skin evoke a sense of autonomy and inner peace that Firdaus is otherwise denied. These moments suggest that nature, though often exploited like women, holds transformative power.

The relationship between women and nature is viewed from ecofeminist perspective especially in the context of the novel's protagonist, Firdaus, as she navigates through oppression, survival, and eventual resistance. The story unfolds as Firdaus recounts her life to the narrator and gives a detailing account of her struggles in a patriarchal society. Abuse, and exploitation of women and nature are interlinked and how resistance against these systems can lead to empowerment and liberation. The writer uses the novel to lampoon the social, political, and ecological injustices perpetuated by patriarchal structures. The novel explores Firdaus' struggles against patriarchal and capitalist systems that perpetuate her oppression.

Nawal El Saadawi examines the novel from the perspective of ecofeminist, which connects the oppression of women to the exploitation of the environment. Her work provides a critical platform for exploring how patriarchal systems and socio-political structures contribute to the subjugation of women and the destruction of natural ecosystems. The novel centers on Firdaus, a woman imprisoned and sentenced to death for killing a man. Through her life story, Saadawi critiques systemic gender oppression and reveals how Firdaus resists and reclaims her agency despite the overwhelming forces against her. The ecofeminist analysis draws parallels between Firdaus' suffering and the exploitation of the natural environment, emphasizing themes of resistance, survival, and liberation. One of the key ecofeminist themes in the novel is the connection between the oppression of women and the degradation of the environment. El Saadawi portrays the natural world as a symbol of freedom and empowerment, while also highlighting the ways in which patriarchal and capitalist systems exploit and degrade the environment. For example, Firdaus's

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

experiences as a rural woman are deeply connected to the natural world. She finds solace and comfort in the desert landscapes and the Nile River, which serve as symbols of freedom and empowerment.

Throughout the novel, El Saadawi uses ecofeminist imagery and symbolism to critique the systems that oppress women and degrade the environment. For example, the character of Firdaus is often associated with images of nature, such as the desert, the Nile, and the sun. These images serve as symbols of Firdaus's strength, resilience, and connection to the natural world. In contrast, the patriarchal and capitalist systems that oppress Firdaus are often associated with images of destruction and degradation, such as the pollution of the Nile and the destruction of the desert landscapes. These images serve as symbols of the ways in which these systems exploit and degrade the environment.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

4.1.1.8. Connection to the Earth and the Body:

Woman at Point Zero

Firdaus' relationship with her body is depicted as one of rejection and violence, and eco-motherism often highlights the deep connection between women's bodies and the earth. Women have historically been associated with the earth due to their roles as life-givers and caretakers, and this association can be seen as both empowering and oppressive. In Firdaus' case, her body becomes a battleground for survival and resistance, much like how nature is often treated as something to be conquered. This is shown in the way Bayoumi and his friends treat her as an object to satisfy their sexual pleasure.

> He took to locking me in the flat before going out. I now slept on the floor
> In the other room. He would come back in the middle of the night, pull
> The cover away from me, slap my face, and then bear down on me with
> All his weight. (66)
> Then one night his body seemed heavier than before, and his breadth smelt
> Different, so I owned my eyes. The face above was not Bayoumi's. (67).

4.1.1.9. Fertility and Female Physiology

Woman at Point Zero

The novel often equates female biology with entrapment. Firdaus's menstruation and sexuality are not celebrated, but rather controlled and punished, illustrating how even natural processes are weaponized against women.

> I never used to leave the house. In fact, I never even left the bedroom. Day and night I lay on the bed, crucified and every hour, a man would Come in. There were so many of them. I did not understand where they Could possibly have come from(76).

In this way, nature is not inherently liberating for women—it becomes a tool of control when viewed through the male perspective.

Firdaus' ultimate act of defiance—her choice to take control over her life by refusing to conform to societal expectations—is akin to reclaiming the earth from the forces that seek to dominate it. In ecofeminist terms, this act can be seen as reclaiming agency over both her body and the land she inhabits.

4.1.2.0. Reclaiming Identity Through Nature in *Nervous Conditions, The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and *Woman at Point Zero*

Nervous Condition

In Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions,* there is an explicit portrayal of women and their relationship with nature in a complex and multi-layered ways. Nature often serves as a metaphor for the societal constraints and expectations placed upon women in the novel. The main character, Tambu, grapples with these expectations as she navigates her own identity and desires within the patriarchal structure of her society. An example is when a dialogue ensued between Nhamo and herself

> Nhamo laughed when I related my story ' So what! I don't care what he says,' he shrugged, shocking me with this disrespectful language that

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> I had not heard before. 'I'm at school, aren't I? It doesn't worry me what he says about me. So, what's your problem? It doesn't even affect you '
> 'But you can't study.'
> 'Whosays? I should know. I go to school. You go nowhere.'
> 'But I want to go to school.'
> 'Wanting won't help.'
> 'Why not?
>
> He hesitated, then shrugged. 'It's the same everywhere. Because you
>
> are a girl.' It was out. 'That's what Baba said, remember?'

However, it also reinforces traditional gender roles that limit their opportunities for education and advancement.

> The needs and sensibilities of the women in my family were not considered a priority, or even legitimate. That was why I was in Standard Three in the year that Nhamo died, instead of in Standard Five, as I should have been by that age. In those days I felt the injustice of my situation every time I thought about it, which I could not help(12).

Tambu's journey throughout the novel involves a struggle to reconcile her own ambitions with the societal expectations placed upon her as a woman. As she gains access to education and begins to challenge these expectations, she finds herself at odds with her family and community. Nature becomes a space where Tambu can assert her independence and forget her own path, away from the constraints of society.

> My grandmother who had been an inexorable cultivator of land, sower Of seeds and reaper of rich harvests until, literally until, her very last Moment.(17)

Purple Violet of Oshaantu

In *Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* the women empowered themselves through farming. They believed in their ancestors as the ones that will bless them through agricultural work.

> When we did not sing, the *omatemos* did. We let the music of *omatemos* take their course, loud and clear.
> 'We call on our ancestors, our great-grandmothers,' one of the women called and the rest of us confirmed. We called on them....
> 'Wake up and look at us '(115).

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

The society placed a great responsibility on them as the source of sustainance. They encouraged Mee Kauna, when she couldn't keep up with the farming pace, by arranging for '*okakungungu'* for her.

> Okakungungun is a good idea. If you don't finish on time for the rain,
> people will talk about you, not your in-laws.'
> We had completed the first phase of okakungungun (113).

Woman at Point Zero

In ecofeminism, nature is often symbolized as a space of resistance, healing, and rebirth.

Firdaus's final acts of defiance, especially her refusal to beg for pardon are framed almost as a return to an essential self, unbound by societal roles. This can be read as a reclamation of her natural, unowned identity, beyond what society has imposed.

> I shall try to persuade her to speak to you for a while,' he said. ' She
> Might agree if I explain you are a psychiatrist, and not one of the
> Public Prosecutor's assistants. She refuses to answer my questions.
> She even refused to sign an appeal to the President so that her
> Sentence might be commuted to the imprisonment for life(4).

Although *Women at Point Zero* does not emphasize nature in the same way as some ecofeminist texts, Firdaus' final moments of agency can be read as a form of connection to the larger, liberating forces of nature. By rejecting the roles imposed on her, she ultimately seeks a form of autonomy that mirrors the broader ecofeminist desire for both women and nature to be respected and allowed to flourish free from exploitation.

The protagonist, Firdaus, draws strength from nature when often she experiences moments of clarity or empowerment in natural settings. Nature becomes a rare space where she feels a sense of control or peace, in contrast to the oppressive structures of patriarchy and society. This Theme discusses the importance of Nature as a Space Outside Patriarchal Control. Although brief, nature

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

sometimes represents a non-patriarchal realm—a place where Firdaus can momentarily escape societal constraints.

> At night, moonbeams flowed over me, silky and white, like the fingers of the Man who lay by my side. (74)

These moments highlight an alternative to the structured, male-dominated institutions that dominate the rest of her life (education, marriage, prostitution, prison).

Another instance is when her fleeting connections to the natural world—like feeling the breeze or seeing the moon—are associated with moments of freedom or awakening.

> The air which entered my lungs was pure and free of dust. I saw a stone Bench facing the river. I sat down on it, and lifted my face to the refreshing Breeze(68).
> My nose filled with the fragrance of the roses wafted across the open Spaces. I let myself sink in this feeling of warmth and softness, drown In the perfume if gentle roses, savour the comfort of the silken sheets As I stretched my legs(74).

Firdaus strives to empower herself through education when her uncle enrolled her at school

> But I came to love school, and girls of my age with whom I used to study. We talked to one another bout our lives, exchanged secrets and revealed our depths to one another (31).
> Sometimes I imagined that I would become a doctor, or an engineer, or a lawyer, or a judge but the night, I kept imagining myself as a great leader or head of state(32).

But it couldn't materialise because of the people that formed her world during those periods that she desired education keep a toxic relationship with her.

> Firstly when she was with her uncle and his wife,
> 'so what do we do with her then?'
> 'We can get rid of her by sending her to the university.
> There she can live in the quarters allocated to the girl students.'
> 'To the university? To a place where she will be sitting side by side with men?
> Besides, where will the money come from for her lodging, and books and clothes?
> Your holiness, I have a wonderful idea.'

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> ‘What is it?’
> ‘ my uncle, Sheikh Mahmoud, is a virtuous man. He has a big pension and no children, and he’s been on his own since his wife died last year. If he marries Firdaus, she will have a good life with him, and relieve his loneliness. Firdaus has grown, your holiness, and must be married. It is risky for her to continue without a husband’ (48).

Bayoumi, the young man that gave her shelter when she left her uncle’s place, having heard that she is interested in schooling, gave her house arrest.

> That night when Bayoumi came home, I said, I have a secondary school certificate and I want to work.’
> ‘I cannot continue to love in your house,’ I stammered. ‘I’m a woman, and you’re a man, and people are talking. Besides, you promised I’d stay only until you found me a job.’
> He reported angrily, ‘what can I do, get the heavens to intervene for you?’
> I was speaking in low tones, and my eyes were fixed on the ground, but he jumped up and slapped me on the face, saying, ‘How dare you raise your voice when you’re speaking to me, you street walker, you low woman?’(66).

In conclusion, *Woman at Point Zero and Nervous Condition* are powerful exploration of the intersections between gender, environment, and resistance as it presents a narrative where women’s struggles for liberation and the exploitation of nature intersect, and ecofeminist perspectives shed light on the parallel ways in which both are subjugated. Through its ecofeminist themes and imagery, the novels critique the systems that oppress women and degrade the environment, and offers a vision of a more just and sustainable world. Firdaus’ story is not just a critique of gender oppression, but also an implicit critique of how patriarchal societies exploit and devalue the environment, likewise the case of Jyoti Singh, underscoring the need for both social and environmental justice.

4.1.2.1. Sisterhood among Women as Resistance

Despite societal oppression, the novel emphasizes the strength and resilience of female friendship and community. Example: Mee Ali provides unwavering emotional and social support to Kauna. Their friendship becomes a form of quiet rebellion against patriarchal isolation and silencing.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

We became inseparable. My husband, sensing the bond of friendship
Between us, named our daughter after Karina. It was a pleasant surprise (16).
"We sat in silence, but it was the kind of silence that speaks more than words
ever could."
The women understood Kauna's situation. There was a wonderful spirit,
spirit of sisterhood. For once, all ill-feeling and hate were forgotten.
We were one again, sisters sharing a common cause (116).

This solidarity challenges patriarchal norms that pit women against each other.

a). Womanhood, environment and nature

The title itself, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* symbolizes a rare, resilient flower, likened to the strength of rural women. The connection between women and the natural environment is spiritual and sustaining, in contrast to how men exploit both. In Mee Ali's narration there are references to the earth, farming, and seasons, reflecting harmony with nature. This contrasts with male characters like Shange, who exploit both land and women. Like the purple violet, women grow quietly and beautifully, even in the harshest conditions.

This metaphor critiques the destructive nature of patriarchy while celebrating the nurturing power of women and nature.

b). Women empowerment and responsibility

Through Mee Ali's reflective voice, the novel calls for transformation, that is, culturally and individually inorder to create space for women's empowerment.

Example: Mee Ali's relationship with her husband Michael is more equal, based on respect and partnership. It serves as a contrast to patriarchal marriages and a model of progressive change.

"Michael never forced me to do anything. We talk. We decide together."

This suggests that change is possible when mutual respect replaces domination.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

c). Solidarity among Women as Resistance

Despite the oppressive patriarchal environment, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* emphasizes the strength and resilience of female solidarity as a form of resistance. The novel's protagonist, Mee Ali, offers unwavering support to her friend Kauna during her time of crisis. This solidarity between women challenges the patriarchal notion that women should be isolated and divided. Rather, the bond between Mee Ali and Kauna becomes a form of quiet rebellion against the patriarchal forces that seek to silence and oppress women.

Mee Ali and Kauna's connection is portrayed as a sanctuary in which they find solace and strength. As Mee Ali reflects:

> "We sat in silence, but it was the kind of silence that speaks more than words ever could." (Andreas, 2001)

This quote underscores the idea that female solidarity transcends verbal expression; it is a powerful, non-verbal form of resistance. The shared experiences of women create a collective strength that allows them to endure and resist the oppressive forces around them.

d). Cultural Change and Empowerment

The Purple Violet of Oshaantu calls for cultural change and the empowerment of women. Through the character of Mee Ali, Andreas presents a model of partnership based on mutual respect and equality. Unlike the patriarchal marriages depicted in the novel, Mee Ali's relationship with her husband Michael is characterized by open communication and mutual decision-making.

Mee Ali reflects:

"Michael never forced me to do anything. We talk. We decide together." (Andreas, 2001)

This partnership serves as a contrast to the oppressive relationships elsewhere in the novel and represents a vision of societal transformation. Through this, Andreas suggests that empowerment is possible when women and men work together as equals, rejecting patriarchal domination.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

4.2 Research Question Two: What eco-motherism themes, motifs, imagery of birth, fertility and renewal, symbolize ecological rebirth and social transformation in the selected novels

Eco-motherism in this novel can be explored through its themes, motifs, and perspectives that interlink women, nature, and the environment under the oppressive forces of patriarchy, neocolonialism, and ecological degradation.

4.2.1. Eco-Motherist Themes

***Yellow Yellow* by Kaine Agary**

Eco-Motherist Themes

a). Motherhood and Environmental Nurturing: The novel equates motherhood with the nurturing power of nature. Zilayefa's mother, Bibi, symbolizes the resilience of the African woman who cares for both her daughter and the land despite neglect by external forces. This reflects eco-motherism's belief that women possess an innate connection to nature and act as its caretakers in both literal and symbolic senses.

b). Environmental Degradation and Feminine Suffering: The oil pollution and environmental destruction of the Niger Delta parallel the exploitation of women's bodies. The Niger Delta landscape becomes a female body violated by colonial oil companies and corrupt governance, linking environmental rape to gendered oppression — a major eco-motherist theme.

c). Displacement and Loss of Identity: Both Zilayefa and her environment experience displacement, she from her home and culture, the land from its natural fertility. Eco-motherism interprets this as the spiritual disconnection from one's ecological roots, which leads to social and psychological instability.

d). Resistance and Female Agency: Though constrained, women like Mama show resilience by sustaining their families despite environmental hardship. Their adaptive strategies reflect eco-

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

motherist resistance, using nurturing, care, and community survival to counter ecological and patriarchal violence.

***Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga**

Eco-motherism combines ecofeminism (links between women and the environment) and maternal theory (women's caregiving, nurturing, and communal responsibilities). In Nervous Conditions, these themes appear through women's relationships to land, food, bodies, community, and survival.

Eco-Motherist Themes in Nervous Conditions

a). Women, Land, and Subsistence Survival: Eco-motherism foregrounds how African women are custodians of the land. Women like Ma'Shingayi represent the traditional rural woman whose identity and daily labour are tied to farming and food production. Her work in the field; planting, weeding, harvesting, reflects how women ensure the survival of their families through ecological labour. Her relationship with the land is a maternal, nurturing one: she "cares" for the soil the same way she cares for her children. Poverty and colonial economic structures threaten this maternal–ecological bond, showing how women and the environment are jointly exploited. The Eco-motherist insight is that when the land suffers, the woman suffers; caring for the land is an extension of mothering.

b). Maternal Sacrifice and Ecological Poverty: Eco-motherism highlights how women carry the burden of environmental hardship. In the impoverished homestead, women's maternal roles are stretched by ecological stress: Ma'Shingayi sacrifices food, comfort, and even her emotional well-being for her children. Scarcity of resources (poor harvests, limited food) mirrors the scarcity of recognition for women's labour. Her exhaustion symbolizes both environmental degradation and patriarchal pressure. Eco-motherist insight highlights Environmental hardship intensifies women's maternal suffering, showing the double marginalization of women and nature.

c). Female Bodies as Ecological Sites of Struggle: Nyasha and Tambu's bodies express tension between culture, patriarchy, and ecological belonging. Nyasha's eating disorder can be read as

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

symbolic of a disrupted relationship with nourishment and the eco-maternal cycle. Tambu's desire for schooling is tied to escaping the "hungry" land, but she also feels guilt about leaving her ecological roots. Eco-motherist insight is that the female body becomes a site where ecological care, cultural constraints, and maternal expectations clash.

d). Community, Care, and the Ethics of Nurture: Eco-motherism emphasizes communal care beyond biological motherhood. Tambu learns communal caregiving from rural traditions such as shared food preparation, communal harvesting, and women's support networks. This ecological sense of community contrasts with Babamukuru's Eurocentric, hierarchical household, which weakens collective nurture. Lucia represents a broader eco-motherist ideal: strong, interconnected, resilient, and protective of her community. Eco-motherist insight: Eco-motherism promotes communal survival rooted in shared labour, not patriarchal authority.

e). Resistance, Agency, and Ecological Feminist Consciousness: Some women resist structures that exploit both them and the environment: Lucia challenges patriarchal limitation and asserts bodily and economic autonomy. Tambu develops ecological awareness—valuing her rural roots even as she seeks education. Nyasha's rebellion, though tragic, exposes the damaging effects of colonial "development" on women and their environment. Eco-motherist insight: Women's resistance is both ecological (protecting their sustaining environment) and maternal (protecting themselves and other women).

f).Education as Ecological Empowerment: Tambu's education symbolizes a break from ecological exploitation and a quest to restore dignity to women's labour. She wants education not to abandon her roots, but to uplift her family. Her gardening project for school fees shows the eco-motherist belief that women can transform nature productively when empowered. Eco-motherist insight: Education reconnects women to ecology with agency, not oppression.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

***The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas**

Eco-motherist themes in The Purple Violet of Oshaantu.

These themes show how women's lived experiences, mothering roles, and connection to the land reflect ecological and social struggles in rural Namibia.

a). Women, Land, and Communal Agriculture: It highlights women as custodians of the environment and food systems. In the novel: Mee Ali and Kauna spend much of their time farming, weeding, planting, and collecting water. Their care for the soil parallels their care for their families—both acts of nurturing and survival. The community depends on women's farming labour, showing the maternal–ecological connection at the heart of rural life. Eco-motherist insight: Women sustain life by nurturing both the land and the family, positioning them as ecological mothers of the community.

b). Motherhood, Emotional Labour, and Environmental Hardship: This examines how ecological stressors intensify women's maternal burdens. Unpredictable seasons, drought, and poor harvests worsen women's emotional and physical load. Kauna's struggles with food scarcity reflect her deeper emotional deprivation and abuse in marriage. Environmental hardship mirrors patriarchal hardship—the more the land suffers, the more women's maternal responsibilities become overwhelming. Eco-motherist insight: Ecological deprivation is intertwined with the deprivation of women's well-being.

c). Women's Bodies as Spaces of Ecological Pain and Renewal: Women's bodies represent ecological suffering and regeneration: Kauna's abuse, physical exhaustion, and grief over her marriage reflect how women absorb environmental and social violence. Pregnancy, childbirth, and caregiving serve as metaphors for renewal, continuity, and the capacity to nurture life despite hardship. Eco-motherist insight: The female body becomes an ecological symbol—carrying trauma but also offering the potential for rebirth.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

d). Communal Mothering and Women's Solidarity: Eco-motherism emphasizes communal nurturing rather than isolated biological motherhood. Mee Ali and Kauna exemplify collective caregiving—sharing resources, emotional support, and daily burdens. Women collaborate in fields, at funerals, in sickness, and during childbirth, reinforcing communal bonds. This unity contrasts sharply with the selfishness and emotional neglect displayed by some men in the novel. Eco-motherist insight: Female solidarity embodies ecological balance—cooperation over domination.

e). Domestic Violence as Ecological and Social Disruption: Kauna's abusive marriage is not only a gender issue but also an ecological one: Emotional violence disrupts her ability to nurture, just as soil depletion disrupts the land's ability to produce. The community sees the breakdown of Kauna's marriage as a threat to social harmony..Eco-motherist insight: Abuse harms both the woman and her ecological world, showing how patriarchy disrupts the "natural" balance of care.

f). Burial Traditions, Rituals, and the Cycle of Life: The novel uses Namibian funeral rituals to illustrate ecological cycles: Death is framed as a return to the earth, symbolizing the continuity of life. Women manage rituals, cooking, and community coordination—maternal acts that reconnect the community to the land during times of loss. Eco-motherist insight: Women restore ecological balance by mediating between life and death.

g). Healing, Reflection, and Nature as Comfort: Nature often represents peace, reflection, and emotional healing: Mee Ali frequently finds solace in open spaces, fields, and the quiet rhythm of rural life. The natural environment provides a space where women's voices and emotions can flow freely. Eco-motherist insight: Nature functions as a maternal presence, offering emotional refuge for women.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

***Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal Elshadawi**

Eco-motherist themes in *Woman at Point Zero*

Although the novel is set largely in an urban, patriarchal Egyptian society rather than a rural ecological setting, the themes of female nurturing, exploitation, survival, bodily autonomy, and the symbolic relationship between women and the environment strongly connect with eco-motherism.

a). The Female Body as an Ecological Site of Exploitation and Resistance: Eco-motherism recognizes the woman's body as a metaphorical landscape—nurturing, life-bearing, yet exploited under patriarchy. In Firdaus's life, her body is used, bought, and controlled by men in the same way the environment is exploited for male benefit. Patriarchal violence (female genital mutilation, sexual abuse, prostitution) parallels ecological destruction, men claim ownership over a resource meant to sustain life. Firdaus's refusal to be exploited (killing Marzouk) represents reclaiming her "ecological territory"—a moment of radical self-healing and resistance. Eco-motherist insight: Women's bodies reflect how nature is treated—violated yet capable of resistance.

2. Disconnection from Nature and the Loss of Maternal Nurture: Firdaus grows up in a home lacking warmth, affection, and maternal protection: Her mother is emotionally and physically disconnected, mirroring how society disconnects people from natural nurturing forces. The absence of maternal care creates ecological imbalance—Firdaus grows in a world where nurturing, like nature's fertility, is denied to her. Her longing for safety and belonging symbolizes the human need for a nurturing environment, both socially and ecologically. Eco-motherist insight: When maternal nurture is disrupted, both women and their ecological world lose balance and harmony.

c). Poverty, Scarcity, and Ecological Survival: Eco-motherism links women's suffering to structural inequalities that affect access to resources. Firdaus experiences extreme poverty—lack of food, clothing, education, and security. Scarcity of resources parallels environmental degradation: women's survival becomes a daily struggle like struggling for water or fertile land. Her movement from village to city shows how urban spaces can become "ecological deserts"—

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

hostile, loveless, and suffocating for women. Eco-motherist insight: Social inequality creates eco-feminine scarcity: when environments are harsh, women bear the heaviest burden.

d). Women as Caregivers in the Midst of Social Ecology Breakdown: Though Firdaus is not a mother, eco-motherism goes beyond biological motherhood—it includes caregiving, healing, and moral nurture. Firdaus offers emotional support to Sharifa and some of the women she meets despite her own suffering. She recognizes other women's pain and internally "carries" their stories like a communal mother. Her compassion exposes the breakdown of a nurturing social ecology where women are left to suffer alone. Eco-motherist insight: Even without children, Firdaus embodies an eco-motherist ethic—nurturing empathy in a world that denies nurturing.

e). Patriarchy as Ecological Destruction: Eco-motherism criticizes systems that dominate both women and the environment. The men in Firdaus's life (uncle, husband, Marzouk, the pimp, the clients) drain her emotionally and physically—similar to how patriarchal societies drain natural resources. Her society treats women as "consumable commodities," reflecting how nature is consumed without regard for regeneration. Firdaus ultimately exposes the system as one that destroys nurturers and the nurturing capacity of society. Eco-motherist insight: Patriarchy harms the ecology of society by destroying women—the primary sources of care and continuity.

f. Inner Rebirth and Ecological Renewal Through Self-Awareness: Eco-motherism includes themes of regeneration, rebirth, and healing. Firdaus's moment of awakening, refusing to be exploited, speaking her truth, and accepting death—is a symbolic ecological renewal. She breaks the cycle of exploitation, showing spiritual rebirth even though her physical life ends. Her voice becomes fertile ground for future change, inspiring social and ethical transformation. Eco-motherist insight: Firdaus becomes a symbol of ecological and feminine rebirth—renewing dignity and truth in a corrupt social environment.

g). Silence, Voice, and Environmental Metaphors: Throughout the novel, silence represents polluted, suffocating environments where women's voices are buried. Firdaus's decision to speak

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

openly to the psychiatrist represents fresh air entering a toxic space. Her narrative becomes the "seed" of change—truth planted in a barren moral landscape. Eco-motherist insight: Restoring women's voices is like restoring ecological balance.

***Female Fear Factory* by Pumla Dineo Gqola.**

Eco-motherism combines ecofeminism with maternal theory to show how women's bodies, labour, nurturing roles, and survival are tied to ecological and social environments.

Eco-Motherist Themes in *Female Fear Factory*

a). The Female Body as an Ecological Site of Control, Surveillance, and Violence: Gqola shows that patriarchy treats women's bodies the same way extractive systems treat the environment; something to control, regulate, and exploit. Women's bodies become landscapes where fear is planted, cultivated, and harvested. Violence against women mirrors environmental destruction—pollution, depletion, and colonization. The "factory" metaphor shows women's bodies as industrial sites—constantly monitored, disciplined, and stripped of autonomy. Eco-motherist insight: Women's bodies are ecological spaces where domination operates, linking gender oppression with environmental exploitation.

b). **Maternal Vulnerability in Violent Social Environments**: Eco-motherism emphasizes maternal care, protection, and community survival. In Gqola's analysis: Mothers must raise daughters in a social ecology filled with fear. The environment women live in—unsafe streets, abusive homes, hostile communities—disrupts the natural nurturing cycle. The constant threat of violence forces mothers to practice "fearful mothering," always preparing their children to survive a dangerous world. Eco-motherist insight: The social environment becomes ecologically toxic, threatening women's ability to nurture and protect.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

c). **Fear as Environmental Pollution:.**Gqola describes fear as something that spreads through society the way toxins spread through air, water, or soil. Fear contaminates women's physical spaces—homes, streets, workplaces. It affects mental, emotional, and social health, similar to how a polluted environment affects ecosystems. Fear acts like a pollutant that shapes how women move, speak, dress, and exist. Eco-motherist insight: A violent society creates an "unsafe ecology," poisoning women's freedom and bodily autonomy.

d). Women's Voices, Storytelling, and Ecological Regeneration: Eco-motherism celebrates renewal, rebirth, and healing. In Gqola: Women's testimonies act like seeds—germinating truth, empowerment, and future change. Naming violence and refusing silence restores emotional and social ecology. Storytelling becomes a maternal act: healing the community and restoring dignity. Eco-motherist insight: Women's narratives help cleanse the toxic environment of silence and fear, enabling renewal.

e). Communal Sisterhood as Eco-Maternal Care: Eco-motherism values shared mothering, collective survival, and community support. Gqola emphasizes women supporting one another through shared experiences of violence. Solidarity becomes a form of ecological protection—women creating safe spaces that function like sanctuaries. These networks protect, heal, and defend women against the "factory" of fear. Eco-motherist insight: Sisterhood acts as a communal womb—nurturing safety, growth, and emotional ecological balance.

f). Patriarchy as a Destructive Ecological System: Gqola describes the "fear factory" as a system that produces violence the way industries produce waste. Men's domination is linked to a culture that consumes women's energy, peace, sexuality, and bodies. Violence is normalized and distributed like pollution across society. Patriarchy degrades social ecology, making communities unsafe and emotionally barren. Eco-motherist insight: Patriarchal systems harm society's ecological wellbeing, just as destructive industries harm natural ecosystems.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

g). Emotional Trauma as Environmental Scarcity: Women live with emotional scarcity; lack of safety, lack of peace, lack of bodily autonomy. These forms of scarcity parallel scarcity in polluted or depleted environments. Trauma affects generational wellbeing, just like ecological damage affects future generations. Eco-motherist insight: Emotional deprivation is an ecological crisis for women, limiting their capacity to nurture themselves and others.

h). Acts of Resistance as Ecological Rebirth: Eco-motherism embraces renewal after destruction. Gqola shows that: Women who resist fear—by naming violence, reclaiming their stories, challenging the system—begin a process of healing. Refusal to be silenced acts like ecological restoration—rebuilding dignity and social balance. Feminist activism becomes a form of ecological regeneration. Eco-motherist insight: Resistance cleanses toxic environments and restores emotional and social fertility.

There are common Eco-motherist themes which run through the selected novels which functions as both an ecological and feminist lens in African women's writing in these novels: Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow*, Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions,* Nawal El Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*, Neshani Andreas's *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* and Pumla Dineo Gqola's *Female Fear Factory.*

Common Eco-Motherist Themes Across the Novels

a. Motherhood and Nature as Nurturing Forces

Theme: Women's bodies and the natural environment are portrayed as sources of life, sustenance, and regeneration.

Symbolic Meaning: Both are exploited under patriarchy and capitalism, yet both possess the power to renew society through care, growth, and healing.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Texts:

In *Yellow-Yellow*, the Niger Delta's fertility parallels the protagonist's own sexual awakening and environmental awareness.

In *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* women's agricultural labor symbolizes communal sustenance and resilience.

b. Fertility, Rebirth, and Ecological Renewal

Theme: Fertility transcends biological reproduction; it becomes a metaphor for social and ecological revival.

Symbolic Meaning: A fertile earth or woman represents the potential for reclaiming autonomy and restoring ecological harmony.

Texts:

Nervous Conditions frames education and self-awareness as a rebirth for Tambudzai and a renewal for colonized women.

Woman at Point Zero uses Firdaus's death as symbolic purification — a radical rebirth from oppression to freedom.

c. Resistance to Environmental and Social Exploitation

Theme: Eco-motherism critiques the twin oppressions of environmental degradation and female subjugation.

Symbolic Meaning: The resistance of women against violence and exploitation mirrors nature's struggle against pollution and capitalist greed.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Texts:

In *Female Fear Factory,* women's resistance to fear becomes a form of social regeneration — breaking the cycle of environmental and bodily control.

In Yellow-Yellow, oil pollution mirrors the violation of the female body, and Bibi's journey symbolizes reclaiming environmental and personal dignity.

3. Imagery of Birth, Fertility, and Renewal

***Yellow-Yellow* (Kaine Agary)**

Imagery: The lush but polluted Niger Delta is depicted as a violated mother.

Birth/Fertility Symbolism: Bibi's mixed heritage and awakening symbolize a new, hybrid consciousness reclaiming ecological and feminine identity.

Renewal: The protagonist's eventual self-awareness parallels hope for environmental justice and feminine autonomy.

***Nervous Conditions* (Tsitsi Dangarembga)**

Imagery: Growth, cultivation, and female education are depicted as acts of planting and nurturing.

Fertility Motif: Tambu's schooling represents the fertility of the mind — an intellectual rebirth breaking patriarchal and colonial chains.

Renewal: The transformation of consciousness in Tambu and Nyasha mirrors the birth of a new eco-feminist generation.

***Woman at Point Zero* (Nawal El Saadawi)**

Imagery: Firdaus's body becomes the contested ground of patriarchy, but her execution marks rebirth into spiritual and moral liberation.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Fertility Motif: Her defiance represents the reclaiming of life from moral decay — an ecological cleansing through death.

Renewal: Symbolic regeneration through the destruction of oppressive systems.

The Purple Violet of Oshaantu **(Neshani Andreas)**

Imagery: Women's bond with the land — tilling, harvesting, nurturing.

Fertility Symbolism: The land and women are both life-givers and sustainers, tied to cycles of growth and renewal.

Renewal: Female solidarity offers communal healing, echoing ecological restoration through care and cooperation.

Female Fear Factory **(Pumla Dineo Gqola)**

Imagery: Fear is portrayed as pollution — a toxic element suffocating society.

Fertility Symbolism: Reclaiming bodily autonomy is akin to restoring natural balance.

Renewal: Women's voices and resistance symbolize the rebirth of a freer, more ecologically conscious society.

4. Synthesis: Eco-Motherism as Symbol of Rebirth and Transformation

Across these novels:

Birth and fertility symbolize hope, creativity, and renewal in societies polluted by patriarchy and ecological destruction.

Women's bodies and nature are depicted as co-sufferers and co-redeemers — their liberation intertwined.

Ecological rebirth mirrors social transformation — healing the environment is inseparable from empowering women.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

4.2.2. Eco-Motherist Motifs. There are many motifs in the selected novels, but below are the common ones in the selected texts

a). The Land and Water Motif: The river and land in Yellow-Yellow serve as maternal symbols of life and continuity. The polluted river mirrors the defiled female body — once pure, now exploited. Eco-motherism reads this as a call for ecological healing and maternal restoration.

b). Oil and Pollution: Oil, while economically valuable, represents corruption, greed, and ecological death. It functions as a toxic motif, showing how the exploitation of natural resources mirrors the exploitation of women.

c). Mother-Daughter Relationship: The relationship between Zilayefa and her mother reflects continuity between womanhood and the natural world. Also, Bibi's connection to her environment contrasts with Zilayefa's alienation, highlighting the loss of ecological consciousness among the younger generation.

d). Migration and Urbanization: Zilayefa's move to the city symbolizes the disconnection from nature, mirroring how modern development distances people from ecological and maternal roots, a recurring eco-motherist warning.

Table 4.1: Summary of Recurring Motifs of Eco-Motherism

Motif	**Representation in Texts**	**Symbolic Function**
Water	Appears in *Yellow-Yellow* (Niger Delta rivers), *Nervous Conditions* (bathing, cleansing), *Woman at Point Zero* (spiritual purification)	Symbol of life, purification, renewal, and the feminine principle of fluid adaptability.
Earth/Soil	In *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, women cultivate the land; in *Nervous Conditions*, fields signify labor and growth	Symbol of rootedness, fertility, and the interconnectedness of life. Motherhood Central to all texts: biological and metaphorical Represents

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

		nurturing, resilience, and the possibility of social rebirth
Death and Rebirth	*Woman at Point Zero* and *Nervous Conditions* both end in symbolic rebirth: death of the old self and emergence of a new consciousness	Transformation and regeneration
Female Solidarity	Women in Oshaantu and *Female Fear Factory* form networks of care and mutual support	Eco-social cooperation that leads to renewal and healing.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

4.2.3. Eco-Motherist Perspectives

a). Women as Healers of Nature: Through Mama's resilience, Agary presents the idea that women's nurturing instincts can heal both family and environment if given recognition and respect.

b). Interconnected Oppression: The novel shows a triple oppression — of woman, land, and community — under patriarchal, capitalist, and colonial systems. Eco-motherism interprets this interconnected suffering as evidence that gender justice and environmental justice are inseparable.

c). Spiritual Connection to Nature: The text conveys a spiritual ecology, where nature is not just a backdrop but a living entity deserving of respect. Bibi's rural lifestyle contrasts with the city's moral and ecological decay, emphasizing the eco-motherist value of harmony between humanity and environment.

d). Reclamation of Indigenous Ecological Values: The story promotes the idea of returning to indigenous wisdom that honors the earth as a mother figure — an idea central to eco-motherism. Westernization and oil capitalism are portrayed as forces that destroy both ecological balance and women's traditional authority.

Table 4.2. Summary of Eco-Motherist Representation

Aspect	Representation in Yellow-Yellow	Eco-Motherist Message
Women's role	Bibi as nurturer, caregiver	Women are custodians of both human and ecological life
Nature's condition	Polluted and exploited Niger Delta	Nature mirrors the violated female body
Conflict	Modernity vs. tradition	Alienation from nature equals loss of feminine and ecological balance
Solution	Reconciling with natural and maternal roots	Healing society requires respect for women and the environment

Kaine Agary uses eco-motherist symbolism to expose how the degradation of the Niger Delta mirrors the subjugation of women. Through the figures of Mama, Zilayefa, and the environment, the novel calls for restoration, ecological justice, and female empowerment as interconnected forms of liberation.

Agary's eco-motherism thus proposes that healing the earth begins with recognizing the maternal essence of both woman and nature — both life-giving yet exploited under patriarchal and capitalist structures.

e). Identity and Self-Discovery: From the second chapter of the novel, the real identity of the protagonist was revealed.

> "Yellow -Yellow" That is what most people in my village called me
> Because of my complexion, the product of a Greek father and an
> Ijaw mother. (7)

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

The protagonist, Zilayefa (nicknamed Yellow-Yellow), embarks on a journey of self-discovery, exactly what her mother did. Her mother, Bibi, wanting greener pasture, decided to leave her village to Port Harcourt.

> A young and naïve eighteen -year-old who has just moved to
> Port Harcourt from her small village with visitors of instant
> Prosperity. She had completed her secondary -school education
> And had passed her school -leaving examinations. With that
> Qualifications, she hoped to get a good job in Port Harcourt (7).

Sisi also had similar experience with Zilayefa. She too had a mixed heritage. While trying to encourage and cheer Zilayefa about her background, she made her to know that, her father worked for UAC , together with her mum, they had two children, she and her brother, but they didn't marry each other.

> "Did he marry your mother?" I asked.
> *Did they marry our women in those days?" she hissed.
> "In any case, only mama sabi who her pickinpapa be and
> Because dey say, 'Married woman no dey born bastard's;
> Not all people wey get papa sabi Dem true papa," she said,
> And we both laughed. "My dear, papa story no begin wit
> You and e no go end wit you. Just look to your future (100-102).

As a young woman of mixed heritage (half-caste) in Nigeria, the protagonist, Zilayefa, struggles with her identity and seeks to understand her place in a society that often marginalizes her. She decided to leave her village also and look for a good betterment for herself and mother.

> I decided that out-of-towner would be my ticket out of my
> Desperate existence, until Sergio's unceremonious exit forced
> Me into a dungeon of tortured soul-searching. Nothing brought
> Me joy. I had so desperately believed that he would take me away
> With him, because that was part of the perfect scenario woven in
> My dreams. My head crammed with thoughts of how I would make
> It to a city- Port Harcourt, Lagos, anywhere! (34).

Eventually, it was their clergyman, Pastor Ikechukwu, that linked her to a woman in Port Harcourt, Madam George (Sisi).

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

During that time, she went to speak with the Pastor of her church
About the matter and came home one day to inform me that Pastor
Ikechukwu was going to help me find a place to stay in Port Harcourt.
I was surprised. She also had been thinking that my evolution into the
Life she dreamed of for me was halting and would soon stop completely
If I remained in the village. I left my village with a note from Pastor Ikechukwu,
Written to a woman who he referred to as his mother, Madam George, and
Directions on how to reach her shop in Diobu once I arrived (45).

f). Empowerment and Independence:

The novel portrays women's quest for empowerment and independence. Zilayefa's journey is marked by her efforts to break free from societal expetations and limitations imposed on women, particularly in the rural and urban Nigerian context.

I had sent so many months dreaming of that day and thinking of nothing
Else but my exit from the village. However, when the day finally came, the
Reality of being on my own sat heavily on my chest, and as the bus pulled
Into the car park in Port Harcourt that sunny morning in April, I knew my
Life had changed. I was seventeen years old, and even though I had no
Idea what kind of life lay ahead of me, the feeling that things were not
Going to be the same again made my ears red and my nose tingle as
Tears glazed my eyes. (45)

g). Mother-Daughter Relationships: The relationship that existed between Zilayefa and her mother is central to the narrative. Zilayefa is the only child of Bibi. Whose departure to Port Harcourt for quest for greener pasture eventually led her to fall into the flirtatious relationship with a Greek man, an expatriate, in one of the Multinational Oil companies in their village. She was impregnated her and shamefully, came back to the village.

Disillusioned, my mother went back to her village to face the as shame
Of being an unwed mother with nothing but dreams about my future (8).
In Sisi's village, half-caste children weren't allowed.
"You young ones today don't have to pass through what some of us
Passed through." "In my place, some oyinbo children were killed at
Birth because it was a shameful thing to have a half-caste in the family (101).

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

This dynamic reflects broader themes of maternal influence, guidance, and the generational transmission of values and experiences. Bibi didn't want her daughter to fall prey to this expatriates or the youths in their village. She guards her jealousy and also over protect her.

> She would make sure that I accomplished what she had not. Unlike other
> Parents who kept their children busy, my mother would not allow me to do too
> Many chores around the house or follow her into the busy for firewood and
> For the other things that people went into the bush for. It was almost as
> Though she was obsessed, consumed by the idea that my education would
> Save me from what I had yet to understand and what she could not explain
> To me. Perchance in savings me, she hoped to save herself (9).

When Zilayefa discussed her migrating to Port Harcourt with her mother, she was afraid reminiscing about her past predicament.

> "Who do you have there? You want to go and become a prostitute in
> Port Harcourt?" my mother asked, every word dripping with as much
> Venom as she could manage.
> "Well, if prostitution will feed me, then I will prostitute, no problem,"
> "You are not serious; you want to spoil your life. Beautiful girl like
> You wants to go and throw away her life in Port Harcourt?" I could
> Hear the fear beneath her angry tone. The fear that transported
> Her back to her own experience eighteen years before; the same
> Fear that made her ask, "where will you stay?" (43).

When she received a later from her mum after two months of stay in Port Harcourt. She felt the umbilical cord, still strong.

> When I read my mother's letter, however, I remembered her voice;
> I pictured her sitting on a low kitchen stool, talking to me. I wanted
> To feel her skin, her hair, her lips; I wanted to be with her in her bed,
> With my head on her stomach (79).

h). Sexuality and Exploitation: The novel addresses issues of sexual exploitation and the complexities of female sexuality. Zilayefa's experiences with men in the city highlight the vulnerabilities women face and their struggles to maintain autonomy over their bodies and choices.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> Admiral leaned over and kissed me on the check. Then he reached
> Under his seat and brought out a bundle of money, which he handed
> Over to me. "For your running around." I was taken back(139).
> My mother wouldn't have tolerated that if she found out…. I was
> Involved in something I was not ready for, and although it was early
> Enough to change my mind and opt out, I found myself drawn to
> Admiral like a fly to a gourd of palm wine. (139)

i). Socio-Economic Challenges: Women in the novel are depicted as navigating various socio-economic challenges. Zilayefa's move from her village to Port Harcourt underscores the economic hardships and limited opportunit available to women, pushing them towards difficult choices. Zilayefa was wooed by admiral, because of money, she gave in to him with the encouraging words of her co-worker, Emem

> "She teased me, saying, she could imagine how my temperature
> Would rise when I saw Admiral later that day and predicted that
> Day would be the last day she saw me as a virgin (142)
> I gave up my virginity to Admiral. For days after, the experience
> Stayed with me. I felt the slight discomfort from the invasion of
> My body by Admiral (145).

j). Cultural Expectations and Gender Roles: Agary delves into the cultural expectations and traditional gender roles that shape women's lives in Nigeria. Majority of the people from this oil mining villages, were farmers and fishermen. The women also took it upon themselves to farm, reasons being that it is the hope of the last resort or some of them are single parents, nurturing their half caste child or children. The novel critiques the patriarchal structures that restrict women's freedoms and advocate for a redefinition of these roles.

Nervous Condition

Eco-Motherist Perspectives in Nervous Conditions

Eco-motherism combines ecofeminism and maternal theory, emphasizing the ways African women use care, nurturance, land-based knowledge, and maternal resilience to resist oppressive systems—colonial, patriarchal, and economic. In Nervous Conditions, Dangarembga subtly

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

embeds eco-motherist ideas through female agency, land relationships, food scarcity, maternal sacrifice, and community survival.

a). The Female Body as a Site of Ecological and Social Survival: Eco-motherism sees the mother's body as a metaphor for land exploited but resilient. In *Nervous Conditions,* Tambu's mother embodies this: She carries the burden of poverty and constant childbirth. Her body becomes the "soil" that absorbs the hardships of colonial capitalism. Her exhaustion symbolizes how women's labour sustains both the family and the nation. Her famous lament—"It's the poverty. You haven't seen anything yet."— anchors the eco-motherist critique of structural oppression that affects both women and their environment.

b). Tambu's Garden as an Eco-Motherist Space: Tambu's attempt to grow maize to pay for her school fees is a strong eco-motherist moment: The garden represents empowerment, self-reliance, and female connection to land. Her mother supports this act of cultivation, symbolizing the passing down of ecological knowledge. When her brother Nhamo steals her maize, it dramatizes patriarchal theft of women's labour and resources. Land, Labour and Female Agency bring about Eco-motherist empowerment. Through cultivating the earth, Tambu nurtures her future—echoing how African women use ecological labour to resist disempowerment.

> 'I shall go to school again,' I announced to my parents.
> My father was sharp with me, 'Your nonsense, you are about to begin
> It ! I can tell
> 'I will earn the fees, I reassured him, laying out my plan for him as I
> Had laid it out in my own mind.
> 'If you will give me some seed, I will clear my own field and grow
> My own maize. Not much. Just enough for the fees. (17).

c). Nyasha's Disordered Body as Ecological Trauma: Eco-motherism also critiques how oppressive systems destroy the mind-body-environment balance. Nyasha's eating disorder marks: A breakdown of the nurturing, natural relationship to food. Disconnection from her cultural "roots" after colonial displacement. A symbolic ecological starvation—not of food alone, but of identity,

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

belonging, and balance. Her body becomes a site of ecological and psychological rebellion, reflecting how colonization erodes women's ability to nurture or be nurtured.

d). African Motherhood as Environmental Stewardship: The mothers in the novel, Tambu's mother and Ma'Shingayi, are tied to the land: They cook, harvest, carry water, and feed entire families despite scarcity. Their labour positions them as keepers of life, similar to how land sustains a community. Their wisdom is practical and ecological: they understand seasons, hunger cycles, and survival strategies. Eco-motherism values this knowledge as a form of power ignored by patriarchal society.

e). Colonialism as Ecological and Maternal Exploitation: Eco-motherism argues that: The domination of women parallels the domination of land. Colonial institutions extract value from both. Babamukuru's Westernized worldview enforces a patriarchal structure that silences women. The mission school represents an institution that reshapes indigenous identity—like land that is fenced, controlled, and repurposed. Women like Tambu's mother and Lucia resist by sustaining indigenous communal values. Thus the novel critiques how colonial "progress" disrupts ecological cycles and maternal structures in African communities.

f). Lucia as an Eco-Motherist Figure of Natural Resilience: Lucia embodies eco-motherist strength: She refuses exploitation and maintains bodily autonomy. She uses survival skills; physical labour, self-reliance, and knowledge of her environment to thrive. She nurtures others without submitting to patriarchal or colonial domination. Her character illustrates eco-motherism's ideal woman: rooted, resistant, nurturing, and unapologetically free.

g). The Home as an Environmental Ecosystem:. Eco-motherism views the home as an ecological unit of survival. In Tambu's homestead: Food scarcity shapes family dynamics. The mother's emotional labour and land-based labour hold the family together. The environment (drought, poverty, soil fertility) influences women's decisions and power.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

The novel shows how women remain the stabilizing centre of the social and ecological "ecosystem" of rural Zimbabwe. So, the novel, fits deeply into eco-motherist analysis because: Women's bodies and labour are connected to ecological survival. The land becomes a metaphor for maternal endurance and exploitation. Female characters use nurturing, resilience, and ecological knowledge to resist oppressive structures. The novel exposes how colonialism and patriarchy damage both environmental and maternal ecosystems. Hence, Dangarembga's portrayal of Zimbabwean women highlights a powerful truth: In the struggle for survival and social transformation, African women remain the custodians of both life and land.

h). Resilience and Resistance: Women in the novel demonstrate resilience in the face of environmental and social challenges in various forms through education, mental health struggles, and maintaining traditional practices. This resilience is paralleled in the sustainable practices tied to the land. Their ability to adapt to changing circumstances highlights the theme of survival and endurance. They demonstrate resilience in the face of environmental and social challenges. Tambudazi was determined, that no matter what, she will be educated.

> Under the circumstances the situation was clear: there was no way of
> Pleasing my father, nor was there any reason to. Relieved, I set about
> Pleasing myself, which antagonized him even further. He did not like
> To see me over-absorbed in intellectual pursuits. (34)

i). Gender and Economic Empowerment

The struggle for education and economic independence by female characters, such as Tambu, is a recurring theme. Education is seen as a pathway to empowerment and a means to break free from the cycles of poverty and dependence. The empowerment of women through education and economic opportunities is linked to broader themes of sustainability, as it enables women to contribute more effectively to their communities and advocate for sustainable practices. Tambu doesn't want to be left out, she too wanted education at all cost. She made up her mind and spoke to her parents

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> ‘I shall go to school again,’ I announced to my parents.
> My father was sharp with me, ‘Your nonsense, you are about to begin
> It ! I can tell
> ‘I will earn the fees, I reassured him, laying out my plan for him as I
> Had laid it out in my own mind.
> ‘If you will give me some seed, I will clear my own field and grow
> My own maize. Not much. Just enough for the fees. (17).

Without being intimidated by her parents, she collected the little seed that her father gave her and she started her project the following day, in December 1962. Her mother, Ma'Shingay also empowered herself economically, in order to assist Babamukuru in sending Nhamo to school

> Fortunately, my mother was determined in that year. She began
> to boil eggs, which she carried to the bus terminus and
> sold to passengers passing through. (This meant that we could
> not eat them) She also took vegetables -rape, onions and tomatoes -
> extending her garden so that there was more to sell. In this way
> she scraped together enough money to keep my brother in school (15)

j). Environmental Degradation and Resistance

The novel addresses issues of environmental degradation caused by colonial and post-colonial exploitation. The depletion of natural resources and the negative impact on the environment are highlighted as significant concerns. The resistance of characters against oppressive systems can be seen as a metaphor for resisting environmental degradation and advocating for sustainable practices. An example is the case of Nhamo and Tambu. After the rigour of cultivating and planting if maize seeds, her brother, Nhamo went to her farm and harvested her maize without her consent. She just noticed that her maize were disappearing from the farm and when she felt depressed about it, she decided to go out to her old school, Rutivi School, where she usually play with her friends. During a conversation with one of her friends, she got the wind of it

> ‘We think of you,’ said Nyari, who had been my best friend,
> As I threw my pads, ‘Especially when Nhamo gives us
> Mealies,’ she said with a sigh. ‘They are fun to roast after class.
> If only you were here ‘
> The blood prickled under my skin. I hopped precariously into
> Square number eight.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> ‘You are out,’ said Chitsva. ‘You did not kick the pada,’
> ‘Nhamo gave you maize?’ I asked on one leg in square number
> Eight.
> ‘Lots of times,’ Nyari assented.
> They told me I took off from the pada game like a dog after a buck.
> I remember at one moment playing pads, the next Nhamo and I rolling
> About in the dirt of the football pitch, a group of excited peers egging
> us on(23).

When her parents finally allowed her to go to town to sell her maize, she discussed with Mr Matimba, one of her teachers. He encouraged her and told her to follow him in the school’s truck to town in order to sell her maize.

> That is how on the Tuesday I kept my appointment with Mr Matimba.
> I climbed into the school truck beside him. My basket of maize was on
> My lap, neatly covered with brown paper. (25)

Mrs Doris gave her Ten pounds and told her to use it to pay school fees for a session and so, returned back to school.

> ‘I will take it home and keep it, and then I will use it to pay my school
> Fees, next year and the year after and the year after (30).

In conclusion, by weaving these themes into the narrative, Dangarembga emphasizes the interconnectedness of gender, nature, and sustainability, showcasing how women play a pivotal role in maintaining the balance between human communities and their natural environments. *Nervous Conditions* presents a nuanced portrayal of women and nature sustainability, emphasizing the interconnectedness of gender, environmental, and colonial issues. The novel calls for a recognition of women’s contributions to sustainability and a reevaluation of oppressive systems that hinder both social and environmental well-being.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

k). Nature/ Entrepreneurship

Nervous Conditions explores themes of Women empowerment and Nature sustainance, Patriarchal hegemony/Nature and entrepreneurship in Zimbabwe. While the book primarily focuses on the struggles of women in a patriarchal society, it also touches on the tension between traditional ways of life and the influence of Western ideologies, which could be seen as reflecting elements of entrepreneurship and nature. The characters navigate between preserving their cultural heritage and adapting to the changing world, highlighting the complexities of identity and survival in a rapidly evolving society. The heroine, Tambu is an intelligent, hardworking and curious fourteen years old girl. She has a great thirst and hunger for good and qualitative education. This is evident in the way she spoke, when her father emphasized it that she will not go to school.

> 'I will earn the fees,' I reassured him. I'm, laying out my plan for him
> As I had laid it out in my own mind. 'if you will give me some
> Seed, I will clear my own field and grow my own maize. Not much.
> Just enough for the fees. (17)
> My father was greatly tickled by this. He annoyed me tremendously
> Laughing and laughing in an unpleasantly adult way. 'Just enough
> For the fees! Can you see her there?' he chuckled to my mother. 'such
> A little shrub, but already making ripe plans!

Seeing her undaunting spirit, her father allowed her to have her own piece of land and she began to cultivate the land in order to have money to send herself to school, due to her hunger for education.

> I began my project the next day, a day in December 1962.
> I worked on the homestead, in the family fields and on my own plot. (17)

She told one of her teachers, Mr Matima, about the maize and was advised to sell it, so that she can have money for her education. He encouraged her and yook her with her harvested maize cobs in the school truck and went to the city to sell it. It wasn't bought by anybody, but Mrs Doris gave

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

her Ten pounds towards her school fees. The money was kept by her Headmaster. This was a great source of inspiration for her and longed more to acquire a good and standard education.

Finally, she was able to go to school when her brother, Nyamo died. According to her uncle Babamukuru, "These children who can go to school today are the ones whose families will prosper tomorrow". These statement, paved a great way for her in fulfilling her dreams, through the help of her uncle. Her leaving the rural village, is freeing herself from the patriarchal power, where women struggle to amass and assert their identities, into a city where she will be free of the limitations that have best her. Tambu makes the most of the opportunity to get an education. And at the end of the term, she takes an entrance test to study at a well-known missionary school. She passes the test and is offered a scholarship to attend the school. At the new school, it is a new experience for Tambu because of a lot of cultural changes. In the midst of this turmoil, she focuses on her studies, although she is nervous about the cultural situation she finds herself in. It's not simply a scholarship, she is confronted with colonialism.

Conclusively, *Nervous Conditions* fits deeply into eco-motherist analysis because: Women's bodies and labour are connected to ecological survival. The land becomes a metaphor for maternal endurance and exploitation. Female characters use nurturing, resilience, and ecological knowledge to resist oppressive structures. The novel exposes how colonialism and patriarchy damage both environmental and maternal ecosystems. Dangarembga's portrayal of Zimbabwean women highlights a powerful truth: In the struggle for survival and social transformation, African women remain the custodians of both life and land.

Purple Violet of Oshaantu

The Purple Violet of Oshaantu is a story about love, relationships and friendships. Neshani Andreas not only tells a compelling story but also offers insights into the historical and cultural backdrop of Namibian women, their relationship with nature, and the importance of sustainability in their lives. The novel serves as a tribute to the resilience and strength of women, highlighting their

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

critical role in sustaining their community and environment . It shows both the best and worst in people and how tradition can hurt people but also provide comfort to others. It explores various themes, including women's empowerment, gender dynamics, and environmental sustainability. From an eco-motherist perspective, several themes emerge: The novel, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas explores themes of women, nature, and sustainability within the context of Namibian society. Below is a clear, scholarly and well-structured analysis of Eco-motherist perspectives in The Purple Violet of Oshaantu by Neshani Andreas. This explanation highlights themes of women, land, nurturing, ecology, community, and resistance—core elements of eco-motherism.

Eco-Motherist Perspectives in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*

Eco-motherism merges ecofeminism, African maternal theory, and indigenous women's ecological wisdom. It highlights how African women sustain both life and land, resist oppression through nurturance, and reclaim agency through communal bonds.

In *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, Neshani Andreas constructs a rural Namibian world where women's struggles, healing, labour, and relationships with the environment reflect eco-motherist concerns. The novel highlights a rich tapestry of historical background that emboiders these themes together, illustrating the interconnected relationships between women, their environment, and sustainable practices. Namibia is a country that rely on agriculture and natural resources for their means of livelihoods. Traditionally, women are responsible for farming and they are resource managers.They play an important role in sustaining these practices. The country Namibia, faces a lot of environmental challenges like desertification and climate change, impacting agricultural productivity. Sustainable practices are essential for community survival, with women often at the forefront of implementing these practices. There is cultural connection, which is made possible by nature. Nature holds a cultural and spiritual significance for many Namibians. Namibian Women, as custodians of traditional knowledge, are pivotal in preserving this connection and promoting environmental stewardship.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

a). Empowerment and Resilience:

The writer presents the story in a chronological order through the perspective of Mee Ali. The protagonist in this novel, Kauna, explains the strength and resilience of Namibian women. Andreas exhibit how women navigate personal and societal challenges. Despite facing marginalization and environmental degradation, the women in the novel demonstrate resilience and resistance. They challenge traditional gender roles and advocate for environmental conservation, emphasizing the interconnectedness of gender justice and environmental sustainability. Neshani Andreas in her novel intricately emboiders themes of empowerment and resilience within the framework of women's lives and their connection to nature and sustainability. She explores how women reclaim their agency in the face of oppressive structures. Through acts of defiance, self-determination, and advocacy, they assert their rights to land, autonomy, and a healthy environment. This theme aligns with ecofeminist ideals of empowerment and liberation. This she does through the protagonist, Kauna, in her efforts to maintain her farm and sustain her family despite her husband's abuse and neglect illustrate a form of empowerment. The land and agricultural activities provide a means for women to gain economic independence and control over their lives. This aligns with the broader theme of women leveraging natural resources to secure a stable livelihood.

> We had good rains this year and are promised plenty to eat. My
> Heart is full of gratitude as I look at all the omahangu, sorghum,
> Spinach, beans, pumpkins, watermelons, nuts, corn and cabbage.
> Those of us who worked the extra mile will not have to buy tomatoes,
> Onions, sweet potatoes and guavas for a good while. (1)

Kauna's small plot of land is her sanctuary, a place where she can assert her independence and nurture her children.

b). Solidarity and Support Networks:

Mee Ali loves and support for Kauna highlights the importance of female solidarity in fostering empowerment. The communal bond between the women in the village is a crucial source of strength and resilience.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> ‘Mee Maita, I choose to come to you because you have been a church
> Elder for many years
> ‘Yes, my sister,’ she said and gave me a smile I did not trust.
> ‘My husband doesn’t know that I have come to see you,’ I
> Went on with a warning smile.
> She gave my shoulder a slight squeeze:
> I informed her that I had come to talk about Kauna’s marriage
> Problems. (7-8).

Mee Ali’s unwavering support for Kauna in times of crisis exemplifies the power of female solidarity. When Kauna’s husband, Shange died, she was with her throughout her mourning period and afterwards.

> If Kauna wanted to be in this room, then people would be coming
> Into it to express their sympathy and condolences, I thought. So, I
> Decided to tidy up a bit. I folded all her clothes neatly and packed
> Them in a half -open suitcase under her bed. I pulled the church
> Dresses together, against the mud wall, to create more space, to
> Move in the room (14).

Also, when Mee Katilina was being inquisitive about Kauna’s domestic animals. Mee Ali stood to her defense

> ‘But I hope her husband’s attitude did not prevent Kauna from
> Keeping animals at other people’s houses. At her friends’ house
> Perhaps.’ She looked at me as if I were supposed to know what
> She was talking about.
> ‘No, no, no, Mee Katilina, Kauna was not into that sort of a thing.
> Don’t even raise that as a possibility.’ I dismissed her statement (42).

Mee Ali loves her friend so dearly that she went to the extent of inviting a nurse, Mee Fudgeni, the soft spoken nurse at the local clinic, who is commonly known as Sustera, to check on her, during the time of her bereavement.

> ‘You want me check on Kauna….?
> ‘Yes, Sustera,’ I replied and quickly briefed her about what had
> Taken place on Saturday. Then I led her to Kauna’s hut
> ‘She stood up, reached into her uniform pocket and brought
> Out a small white container. ‘The tablets are here,’ she said,
> Handling me the Valium. (45)
> ‘Mee Kauna, with Mee Ali here beside you, you will be fine.
> You are very fortunate to have a friend like her. I wish I had

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

One like her too. We are all jealous of you, you know.' (46).

The novel showcases the empowerment of women through its protagonist, Kauna, and her friend, Mee Ali. In a patriarchal society where women are often subjugated, Kauna's journey reflects this.

> I would usually discover that Shange had beaten Kauna when
> I noticed a bruise or when, weeks later, she mentioned it in
> Conversation.
> 'Wht didn't you tell me?' I would ask in shock and dismay.
> 'You get so angry, so emotional. I don't want to involve you
> In my problems to that extent (61).

c). Adaptation to inimical condition

Resilience in the novel is portrayed through the characters' ability to withstand and adapt to various adversities, often with a connection to the natural world. The women's resilience is reflected in their relationship with the land. They demonstrate an ability to adapt to the harsh environmental conditions of Namibia, symbolizing their inner strength and resilience. Also, the women's ability to cultivate the land despite droughts and poor soil conditions reflects their resilience and tenacity. Mee Ali while ruminating about the plight of her friend, Kauna, explained the Interconnectedness between her and the land. She explained how emotionally and physically women were attached to nature.

> What will the Shanges do with Kauna? Will they take everything
> Away from her too? If they asked her to go, where will she go?
> Where? I cannot imagine that they will throw her off the land,
> The land she loved and worked so hard on. The land that helped
> Her to raise her children. The land she talked to so many times.
> The land she has shed tears and sweat on? (108).

d). Cultural Resilience: Through the transmission of agricultural knowledge, the women ensure the continuity and sustainability of their cultural practices. The preservation of traditional knowledge and practices related agriculture and natural resource management among the women represents cultural resilience. This knowledge is passed down through generations, ensuring the sustainability of their way of life.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

e). Women and Nature Sustainability:

The novel explores the interconnectedness of women and nature, which shows that the sustainability of one is linked to the sustainability of the other. The novel often depicts women's close relationship with the land and nature. Through the character of Kauna, who is deeply connected to her rural environment, the story highlights women's roles as caretakers of the earth and their reliance on natural resources for sustenance and livelihood. It also reflects on how women's lives are closely linked to their natural environment. Sustainable practices and a deep understanding of their land's rhythms are depicted as integral to their existence. The characters embody environmental stewardship, recognizing the importance of maintaining the health of their natural surroundings to ensure long-term sustainability. By engaging in practices that protect and nurture the environment, the women demonstrate their role as stewards of the land.

f). Symbiotic Relationship:

The relationship between the women and their environment is depicted as symbiotic. The women depend on the land for sustenance, and in turn, they practice sustainable farming methods that help preserve the environment. The women's deep understanding of the land and their sustainable farming practices highlight a harmonious relationship with nature.

g). Female supportiveness

The importance of community and solidarity among women is a recurring theme. Women come together to support each other, share resources, and collectively address challenges such as drought, poverty, and gender-based violence. This illustrates the importance of collective strength.This communal bond strengthens their ability to confront both social and environmental injustices. Therefore, the theme of female supportiveness is expanded in the novel as other characters are introduced who embody different forms of strength. Kauna's aunt Mee Fennie is a role model in that she divorced her husband and successfully raised three children on her own. Sustera is a nurse who sends Kauna to the hospital after a particularly bad beating by Shange and

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

helps her obtain contraception when she wishes to stop having children. Mukwankala is an elderly woman who challenges Shange in public about his treatment of Kauna after learning that she has been hospitalized. The most inspirational example of female collaboration takes place when Ali helps Kauna organize an okakungungu upon realizing that her friend needs help tilling her land. She saw Kauna and her children working in the field in the hot sun till afternoon and suggested she arranged for okakungungu.

> 'Why don't you arrange for okakungungu?' I asked, some what hesitantly.
> 'Okakungungu?' Kauna asked, pulling a face.
> 'Well, I don't know, it's just, it means I have to ask people.'
> 'But that is how it is done, asking people. How many times
> Have you participated in okakungungu?'
> 'Many times, I guess…..'
> 'So now, what is wrong with people participating in yours?' (108-109)

h). Community and Solidarity:

Female solidarity and community support are central themes. The women of Oshaantu support each other through hardships,

> Before the cocks crowed and the dawn had broken, the women of
> Oshaantu were already at the Shanges. Kauna ululated to welcome
> The women. Kauna and I were pleasantly surprised by the high turnout.
> Almost all the women we had invited came. Tate Oiva's crazy ex-wife,
> Heard about Kauna's okakungungu and invited herself. (114)

"The women understood Kauna's situation. There was a wonderful spirit, a spirit of sisterhood." In a single day, the women of the village are able to complete work which would have burdened Kauna and her children for weeks beyond the ideal season for planting. Ali is in awe of the outpouring of support shown for Kauna and what the women have accomplished as a group, "As we parted, I looked at them and thought, Yes, girls, you have done it again."

> I had never seen Kauna in such a relaxed and happy mood. I stood
> Still to embrace this rare mood.
> We worked and worked.
> We worked with one spirit.
> We worked as if we completed for a prize.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

We sang in harmony.
Songs of our ancestors,
We call on our ancestors, our great-grandmothers,' (115)

i). Female friendship

The Purple Violet of Oshaantu is mostly told from the point of view of Mee Ali, Kauna's best friend and neighbour. Ali is older than Kauna and has taken on a nurturing role for her, especially as all of Kauna's family leaves in a different town miles away. Their relationship is great and it's clear to see how much they care about one another. It's not just the friendship between the main two women that's the focus of *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*. Female friendship is a big theme in this book and it shows the value of that friendship and respect in ways I wasn't expecting. It shows how women (like anyone) have many different facets to their personalities. These women might gossip about Kauna and how her husband sleeps around but that doesn't mean they'll necessarily abandon her and refuse to help in her time in need. As well as friendship being a huge part of *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* so was the conflicts between tradition and modernity. It was published in 2001 but a lot of the action takes place in a village with few modern amenities. It's not the technology (or lack thereof) that stands out, it's the conflicting opinions of younger generations verses older ones. Older generations want to do things in a certain way for Kauna's husband's funeral and when Kauna doesn't act as a grieving widow traditionally should, she starts to get ostracised. It's tradition to not speak ill of the dead and for the widow to put on a huge performance but no matter how her husband died, Kauna didn't love him anymore for how he treated her – he even put her in hospital once. She doesn't see why she should do certain things and while Ali agrees with her in some ways, she doesn't want her friend to be shut out by her in-laws and be left with nothing. The writing is pretty simple but often effective and I liked how words in Oshiwambo and Afrikaans were used throughout the book. Sometimes there was an asterisk and a translation

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

at the bottom of the page and others they weren't. There was a glossary at the back of the book to check the meaning of these words but sometimes you could have a good guess at what they meant due to context of the characters conversation.

Some other Eco-motherist perspectives include:

a). The Rural Environment as a Feminine and Maternal Space: The novel is set in a rural village where: The land is central to women's survival, identity, and daily routines. Women engage in farming, water-collecting, tending animals, and nurturing gardens. The natural environment mirrors their emotional states—dryness, drought, fertility, or growth. The land becomes a metaphorical mother, sustaining life despite patriarchal structures. Women's daily relationship with nature situates them as caretakers of ecological and social continuity.

b). Mekwankala and Mee Ali: Women as Nurturers of Community: Eco-motherism celebrates women's collective caregiving. Mee Ali, Vicky, and Kauna support each other through grief, domestic violence, and poverty. Their solidarity resembles ecological interdependence, each woman nourishes the others. This sisterhood acts like a network of roots sustaining a tree, especially when Kauna's husband dies. Through caregiving, these women preserve the human ecosystem of the village.

c). Kauna's Body as an Ecological-Maternal Site of Hurt and Renewal: Kauna's suffering under her abusive husband parallels abuse of land: She is exploited, overworked, and emotionally drained. Like overworked soil, her body is pushed to its limits, yet expected to keep producing. Her grief becomes a form of ecological depletion, but her healing reflects renewal. Eco-motherism reads Kauna's trauma as symbolic of the violence inflicted on women and the environment in patriarchal rural systems.

d). The Purple Violet Flower as an Eco-Motherist Symbol: The purple violet—rare, delicate, but resilient, mirrors women in the story: It grows in harsh conditions, symbolizing women's endurance. Its beauty resists erasure, just as women resist oppression. It becomes a metaphor for

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

female fertility, renewal, and ecological rebirth. Through the flower, Andreas links female identity with natural resilience.

e). Maternal Labour and Ecological Knowledge: Women in the novel possess deep environmental knowledge: When to plant crops, how to prepare food sustainably, how to repair homes during rainy seasons, how to manage scarce resources like water, this knowledge is passed from older women to younger ones, forming a maternal lineage of ecological wisdom, central to eco-motherism.

f). Domination of Women Reflects Domination of Land: Eco-motherism argues that the oppression of women mirrors the exploitation of nature. Patriarchal norms restrict women's rights to land and property. Men misuse land and neglect communal wellbeing. Kauna's husband's death exposes how male irresponsibility destabilizes both the family and the community's ecological stability. The novel critiques social structures where men benefit from women's labour but deny them dignity and ownership—similar to how people exploit land without respecting its nurturing capacity.

g). Community Rituals as Eco-Motherist Healing: The mourning rituals following Kauna's husband's death reflect an ecosystem of care: Women gather, cook, fetch water, and manage the home during funeral rites. Their caregiving heals both emotional wounds and the disrupted social order. The rituals are grounded in land-based practices—harvesting, cooking, gathering firewood. Thus, women become restorers of ecological and social balance through maternal labour.

h). Mee Ali as a Voice of Eco-Motherist Consciousness: Mee Ali narrates the story with deep empathy and ecological awareness: She observes women's connection to land, nature, and communal survival. She critiques patriarchal practices that drain women like "a land stripped of nutrients." She highlights how women, not men, keep the village alive through nurturing and ecological work. Her perspective foregrounds women as custodians of life and environment.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Conclusively, from an eco-motherist perspective, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* portrays women as the nurturing force connecting community and nature. She exposes how violence against women parallels ecological degradation, elevates female solidarity, ecological knowledge, and maternal caregiving as sources of resistance. Neshani uses symbolism (flowers, drought, farming, land-work) to connect women's wellbeing with environmental health. Also, the novel ultimately argues that societies thrive only when women—and the environment they embody and sustain, are protected, valued, and allowed to flourish.

Women at Point Zero

In *Woman at Point Zero* by Nawal El Saadawi, themes that are related to Eco-motherist perspectives are deeply intertwined. The novel is based on the life of Firdaus, the protagonist, a woman sentenced to death for killing a man and also examines how women, the environment, female bodies, and systems of oppression are interconnected. In *Woman at Point Zero,* Saadawi presents a world where the degradation of women mirrors the degradation of land, and where Firdaus's journey becomes a critique of systems that exploit both nature and womanhood. Although the novel has little overt "nature imagery," it uses symbolic landscapes, bodily metaphors, scarcity, and maternal erasure to dramatize women's ecological alienation and longing for rebirth.

a). Resistance and activism

The novel also explores the theme of resistance and activism, highlighting the ways in which Firdaus and other women resist and challenge the systems of oppression that perpetuate their marginalization. Through Firdaus's narrative, El Saadawi demonstrates the importance of women's agency and resistance in challenging patriarchal and colonial systems. The novel also examines the relationship between cultural heritage and identity and the natural environment. Firdaus's

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

experiences are deeply connected to the natural world, and El Saadawi's narrative highlights the ways in which the degradation of the environment perpetuates the oppression of women.

b). Rejection of Patriarchal Norms

Ecofeminism critiques the patriarchal mindset that exploits both women and nature. In the novel, Firdaus' rejection of the societal norms and expectations that constrain her, particularly through her decision to enter the world of prostitution and later kill her abuser, represents a break from these norms. This is a form of resistance not just against the patriarchal structures that oppress her, but also against the exploitation of women and nature within these frameworks.

Firdaus' eventual empowerment, as tragic as it may be, suggests that breaking free from the oppressive systems that devalue women and the environment can lead to a form of liberation. However, the novel also underscores the difficulty of this liberation within a society that values exploitation over care and mutual respect.

c). Oppression and Liberation:

Firdaus's journey reflects the broader struggle of women to liberate themselves from societal constraints. Her resistance against the systemic abuse and exploitation mirrors the struggle for sustainable, equitable development where marginalized voices are heard and empowered. Due to the mental, physical torture and her past experiences, she reacts to any stranger that comes near her in the prison cell.

> Firdaus did not actually say she knew me.
> If she had rejected me without knowing who I was, there was
> No reason for me to feel hurt. Her refusal to see me was not
> Directed against me personally, but against the world and everybody in it(8).

d). Exploitation of Resources and Women:

Firdaus's life is characterized by exploitation by various men who seek to control her body and her autonomy. This can be paralleled with the exploitation of nature or natural resources, where

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

resources are taken without regard for sustainability or the wellbeing of the environment. Just as Firdaus is used and discarded by men, the environment is often exploited without regard for sustainability or long-term consequences.

> For I was only a successful prostitute. And no matter how successful
> A prostitute is, she cannot get to know all the men. However, every single
> Man I did get to know, filled me with but one desire: to lift my hand and
> Bring it smashing down on his face. But because I am a woman, I have
> Never had the courage to lift my hand. And because I am a prostitute,
> I hid my fear under layers of makeup (14).

Firdaus exploitative experience, starts from her father. She explains how females were exploited by her own father

> That knows how to exchange his virgin daughter for a dowry when
> There was still time, how to bend his wife and make her bite the dust
> each night(14).

Despite the fact that their Imam do sermonized it that,

> Defaming the honour of a woman was a sin, and injustice was a sin,
> And beating another human being was a sin…? (15).

Just as Firdaus fights back against her oppressors, there's an implicit call for fighting against environmental exploitation.

e). Resistance and Autonomy

Firdaus's journey towards reclaiming her autonomy can be seen as a metaphor for the need to reclaim and protect natural resources. Her resistance against patriarchal structures can inspire a similar resistance against environmental degradation. Firdaus's resilience and ultimate resistance against her oppressors reflect the broader need for sustainable practices that protect and empower rather than exploit. Her defiance serves as a call for justice and equity, essential components of sustainable development. Firdaus speech with a female Doctor in Qanatir prison gives a detailed

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

information about her circumstances as she unfolds her life before the doctor and this the doctor did after she had died, to give her life in ink on paper.

> Let me speak. Do not interrupt me. I have no time to listen to you.
> They are coming to take me at six o'clock this evening. Tomorrow
> Morning, I shall no longer be there. Nor will I be in any place known
> To man. This journey to a place unknown to everybody on this earth
> Fills me with pride. (13)

f). Cultural and Social Critique:

El Saadawi critiques cultural and social norms that perpetuate gender inequality and environmental degradation. By highlighting these issues, the novel advocates for a rethinking of societal values towards more sustainable and equitable practices. She explains the attitude of her father to the family, anytime calamity befall them

> When one of his female children died, my father would eat his supper,
> my mother would wash his legs, and then he would go to sleep, just as
> he did every night. When the child that died was a boy, he would beat my
> mother, then have his supper and lie down to sleep (23).

No matter what happens, her father will eat, even, when there was no food at home, he would eat, while other members of the family would sleep without food.

> Sometimes when there was no food at home, we would all go to
> bed with empty stomachs. But he would never fail to have a meal.
> My mother would hide his food from us at the bottom of one of the
> holes in the oven. He would Sir alone while watched him. (23)

g). Nature and Sustainability

The novel discusses the connection between women and the land, emphasizing how both are subjected to control and exploitation. Firdaus's life can be seen as a metaphor for how societies exploit both women and the environment.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> I was speaking in low tones, and my eyes were fixed on the ground, but he jumped up and slapped me on the face, saying, 'Hiw dare you raised your voice when you're speaking to me,you street waker, you low woman (66)

There is the symbolic use of Nature in the novel to reflect Firdaus's inner state. For instance, moments of clarity and realization for Firdaus are often accompanied by references to the natural world, suggesting a connection between her inner liberation and the natural environment.

> The air which entered my lungs was pure and free of dust. I saw a stone bench facing the river. I sat down on it, and lifted my face to the refreshing breeze. The river reflected the green of the trees.... but the colours mingled and everything around radiated this liquid green light which surrounded me, envelopes me completely, so that I felt myself gradually drowning in it (69).

h). The Absence of Nurturing Spaces: Environmental Barreness: From the start, Firdaus grows up in an environment marked by: scarcity (food, water, shelter, security), abuse (physical, sexual), emotional and ecological deprivation. The barren, harsh environment functions as symbolic ecological infertility, mirroring the crushing of Firdaus's potential. Eco-motherism interprets this as showing how oppressive patriarchal climates starve women of nurturing spaces, just as degraded land cannot nourish life.

i). The Body as Colonized Land: Firdaus's body becomes a metaphorical "landscape": exploited by men who trespassed without consent, used for male pleasure and economic gain, stripped of autonomy. Just as colonized land is owned, divided, and abused, so is Firdaus's body. Her body becomes a site of ecological extraction, where men take without giving, echoing eco-motherist critiques of environmental plunder.

j). Firdaus's Search for Maternal Warmth as Ecological Longing: Eco-motherism emphasizes the maternal as a source of safety, nourishment, and continuity. Firdaus's life is marked by the absence of maternal protection: Her mother is emotionally distant. The maternal figure disappears

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

early. She grows up without nurturing, comfort, or feminine solidarity. This lack of maternal warmth parallels ecological deprivation—a child raised in dry, unfertile soil. Her quest for love, identity, dignity, and belonging becomes a search for ecological and emotional grounding.

k). Women's Bodies and Environmental Scarcity: Women in the novel face a world lacking: safety, food, stable home, emotional nourishment. This scarcity reflects the deprivation of resources in an oppressive socio-ecological system.

Eco-motherism argues that when societies treat women poorly, they also mismanage the environments that sustain life. Firdaus's hunger (literal and metaphorical) symbolizes ecological hunger—a longing for growth and life that the system denies.

l). Eco-Motherist Rebellion: Firdaus Reclaims Her Body: Firdaus transforms her body from: a site of male exploitation into a space of self-determination. Her act of choosing prostitution on her own terms can be interpreted as an eco-motherist reclamation of land: She asserts ownership over her body (her "territory"). She decides who enters her space and at what cost. She stops being exploited for free and claims the power to sustain herself. This mirrors eco-motherist ideology: Women reclaiming their bodies as they reclaim the natural world from patriarchal exploitation.

m). The City as a Toxic Ecosystem: Firdaus moves from a rural environment to the city—a space that is: morally polluted, economically harsh, emotionally suffocating, filled with predators in human form. The city's coldness mirrors ecological toxicity, a world that devours vulnerable women. This setting contrasts with her brief moments of peace outdoors, showing that urban patriarchy destroys both women and ecological harmony.

n). The Maternal Symbol in Eco-Motherist Reading: Firdaus as a Mother of Herself. Although Firdaus never becomes a biological mother, she exhibits self-maternal empowerment: She

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

nurtures, protects, and raises herself. She becomes her own source of courage and rebirth. Her final act of killing her pimp is a maternal act of protecting the "self-child" within her. Eco-motherism sees motherhood not only biologically, but as care, renewal, and inner rebirth. Firdaus becomes the mother of her own liberation—

a symbolic ecological regeneration.

o). Death as Ecological Rebirth and Freedom: Firdaus's acceptance of death is eco-motherist because: It rejects the oppressive ecosystem. It becomes a "return to the earth"—a symbolic purification. It marks the collapse of a system that could not destroy her spirit. In eco-motherist symbolism, rebirth often happens through destruction of the old. Firdaus dies, but what she stands for—the exposure of patriarchal brutality—lives on like a seed planted in fertile soil.

Conclusively, an eco-motherist reading of *Woman at Point Zero* reveals: The exploitation of women mirrors environmental degradation. Firdaus's body is treated like colonized land, used, abused, and devalued. Her story exposes how patriarchal scarcity destroys both women and ecological balance. Her rebellion represents a reclamation of bodily and ecological agency. Her death becomes a form of spiritual and ecological renewal. Her relationship with the natural world serves as a metaphor for her own growth and resistance. Her moments of connection with nature symbolize her pursuit of autonomy and self-sufficiency. Saadawi's novel, though not explicitly ecological, powerfully fits eco-motherist discourse through its metaphorical landscapes, bodily symbolism, and critique of systems that destroy both women and the environments in which they live.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Female Fear Factory

Female Fear Factory is an intriguing and powerful short story by Pumla Gqola that explores the experiences of women navigating a world full of fear and danger. The story revolves round the protagonist, a young woman named Zinzi. She finds herself trapped in a society where fear is manufactured and perpetuated by those in power. She encounters different forms of oppression and violence. Zinzi needs to navigate her way through a landscape where her very existence is threatened. Readers are invited to explore themes of resilience, survival, and the strength of the human spirit in the face of adversity through the narrative techniques of Gqola. She explores how women's experiences intersect with environmental issues and sustainability, emphasizing the importance of considering gender dynamics in environmental discourse. She examines the intersection of gender, environmentalism, and sustainability in South Africa. The novel discusses different issues that relate to women and nature sustainability, like how women are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation and how their roles in environmental activism are often overlooked. Gqola's work highlights the complexities of these issues and calls for a more inclusive and intersectional approach to environmentalism. In her novel, *Female Fear* Factory, she explores themes related to women, nature, and sustainability, often intertwining them to depict the interconnectedness between women's roles, environmental preservation, and societal harmony. Various themes that intertwine to create a narrative which explores the complex relationship between women, nature, and sustainability, will be explore in highlighting the importance of recognizing and addressing gender disparities in environmental conservation efforts. These themes might include the exploitation of natural resources, ecofeminism (the connection between the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature), the resilience of women in the face of environmental challenges, and the need for gender-inclusive approaches to sustainability.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

It explores how women navigate and resist environmental threats while highlighting the importance of their voices in shaping sustainable solutions. Pumla Dineo Gqola, focuses on women, nature, and sustainability in several ways like:

Eco-Motherist Perspectives in *Female Fear Factory*

Although *Female Fear Factory* is a nonfiction work centered on sexual violence and patriarchal control, it powerfully aligns with eco-motherism through its analysis of women's bodies, exploitation, fear systems, social environments, and the destruction of nurturing ecosystems. Eco-motherism blends ecofeminism, maternal theory, and African indigenous perspectives on women and the environment. It examines how patriarchal societies exploit both women's bodies and ecological systems, and how maternal or nurturing values are suppressed. Gqola exposes how the production of fear in women parallels environmental violence, degradation of social ecosystems, and the breakdown of nurturing structures that should protect women.

a). Ecofeminism: The book highlights the interconnectedness of gender-based violence and environmental degradation, emphasizing the need for sustainable practices that respect both women's bodies and the natural world.

> Slowly, as the rape of Black women became institutionalized, normalized and mythologized, these women were constructed as 'unrapeable.' To be unrapeable does not mean 'to be impossible to rape'. It means the opposite. The unrapeable is that category of humans constructed and marked as free to be raped without consequences(xv)

b). Gendered experiences of nature: The author illustrates how women's relationships with nature are shaped by societal expectations, power dynamics, and cultural norms, leading to unique experiences of exploitation and resistance. The patriarchal society do give the female children the societal laws and orders which are expected to be obeyed:

LeadCity University DO NOT COPY

> Patriarchal societies teach a specific logic around gender. For example, ideas about boys and girls are very different, and specific realms of what is permissible are often taught to children as lessons and as corrections. Adults in various contexts will often teach these lessons to children, which range from the seemingly mild ('sit like a girl ') to the aggressive ('dress like you want to be treated ')(28)

c). Environmental justice: The text advocates for a feminist approach to environmental justice, recognizing the disproportionate impact of ecological destruction on women's lives and livelihoods.

> Many rape cases draw national attention in India, a country in which some statistics suggest that roughly ninety rapes are reported per day to the police(54).

d). Resistance and resilience: Throughout the book, the author celebrates women's resistance movements and resilience in the face of environmental degradation and gender-based violence, highlighting the importance of collective action and solidarity.

> Our bodies are our primary means of participating socially, economically, politically, spiritually and creatively in the society. They are the beginning point of the application of rights; the place in which Rights are exercised, and for women in particular, the place where rights are most often violated (xxix).

The case of Laura and her rapist, Andrew, she with a dogged determination to hold him accountable post it on Andrew's social media page without feeling ashamed. Although most of her elaborate attempts failed, but she reported the rape, unmasked Andrew on social media, bought the same date -rape drug he used on her and then used it on him before she kidnapped him, so as to stage a more believable rape scenario.

Gqola is optimistic by writing that, "The feminist articulations in each chapter are not romantic used as victory. But they always matter because they create something: sometimes illumination, and at other times strategies for the smashing of patriarchy. It may be a long, bloody battle, but I am committed to the consistent creation of feminist hope and a patriarchy - free future.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

e). Cultural and Social Critique:

El Saadawi critiques cultural and social norms that perpetuate gender inequality and environmental degradation. By highlighting these issues, the novel advocates for a rethinking of societal values towards more sustainable and equitable practices. She explains the attitude of her father to the family, anytime calamity befall them

> When one of his female children died, my father would eat his supper, my mother would wash his legs, and then he would go to sleep, just as he did every night. When the child that died was a boy, he would beat my mother, then have his supper and lie down to sleep. (23)

No matter what happens, her father will eat, even, when there was no food at home, he would eat, while other members of the family would sleep without food.

> Sometimes when there was no food at home, we would all go to bed with empty stomachs. But he would never fail to have a meal. My mother would hide his food from us at the bottom of one of the holes in the oven. He would Sit alone while watched him. (23)

f). Nature and Sustainability

The novel discusses the connection between women and the land, emphasizing how both are subjected to control and exploitation. Firdaus's life can be seen as a metaphor for how societies exploit both women and the environment.

> I was speaking in low tones, and my eyes were fixed on the ground, but he jumped up and slapped me on the face, saying, 'Hiw dare you raised your voice when you're speaking to me,you street waker, you low woman (66)

There is also the symbolic use of Nature in the novel to reflect Firdaus's inner state. For instance, moments of clarity and realization for Firdaus are often accompanied by references to the natural world, suggesting a connection between her inner liberation and the natural environment.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

> The air which entered my lungs was pure and free of dust. I saw a stone bench facing the river. I sat down on it, and lifted my face to the refreshing breeze. The river reflected the green of the trees.... but the colours mingled and everything around radiated this liquid green light which surrounded me, envelopes me completely, so that I felt myself gradually drowning in it (69).

g). The "Factory" as a Toxic Social Ecosystem: Gqola describes society as a factory that manufactures fear in women. From an eco-motherist view: The "factory" is an artificial, industrial space that erodes natural, nurturing environments. It contrasts with ecosystems that support growth, relationships, and maternal protection. Instead, it becomes a site of pollution; psychological, emotional, and bodily. Thus, the female fear factory is a metaphor for the destruction of natural feminine and ecological harmony.

h). Women's Bodies as Colonized, Exploited Land: Eco-motherism argues that women's bodies are treated like colonized territory—much like exploited land. Gqola shows how patriarchy: trespasses female bodies without consent, extracts pleasure, labour, and control disciplines and polices women's movements treats women as spaces to conquer. This mirrors ecological exploitation: just as the environment is plundered, women's bodies are commodified and used as resources.

i). The Disruption of Maternal/Nurturing Environments: Eco-motherism emphasizes the importance of maternal safety, communal care, and nurturing ecosystems. In *Female Fear Factory,* these ecosystems are destroyed by: sexual violence, fear-based social control, victim blaming, normalization of abuse. Women no longer live in environments where care and maternal safety can flourish. Instead, the "factory" builds a world where: mothering is unsafe, girls are vulnerable, and maternal bonds are broken by fear. This breakdown mirrors environmental destruction, where natural ecosystems collapse under human violence.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

j). Fear as a Method of Ecological and Bodily Control: Gqola explains how fear is systematically instilled in women to regulate their: behaviour, movement, choices, bodily autonomy. Eco-motherism compares this to controlling nature through: fences, borders, industrialization, domestication. Fear is the pesticide that keeps the system functioning. It prevents women from blossoming—symbolizing how ecological abuse prevents natural growth.

k). The Maternal Body as a Site of Conflict: In eco-motherist theory, the maternal body is both life-giving and vulnerable. Gqola shows how the fear factory attacks the maternal role by: making pregnancy unsafe (through assault, economic control, or maternal mortality risks), brutalizing mothers who resist gender norms, turning maternity into a space of fear. Women lose control of their own reproduction and bodily destiny, echoing ecological loss of reproductive cycles in damaged ecosystems.

l). Violence Against Women as Environmental Violence: Gqola shows that gender-based violence: disrupts families, destabilizes communities, affects intergenerational wellbeing. This aligns with eco-motherist views that violence against women leads to social and ecological imbalance. Because women often act as: caregivers, community anchors, environmental stewards, transmitters of cultural knowledge, harming women parallels harming the social environment itself.

m). Silencing Women as Silencing the Environment: Eco-motherism argues that suppressing women's voices mirrors how the environment is denied agency.

In *Female Fear Factory:* women are told to "keep quiet", survivors are dismissed or shamed, and patriarchal societies treat women's testimonies as expendable. This replicates how industries ignore environmental warnings, silence ecological destruction, or erase indigenous knowledge.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Women's silence is equal to environmental silence. Their voices represent ecological truth, which must be suppressed for the destructive system to thrive.

n). Reclaiming the Self as an Eco-Motherist Reclamation: While the book highlights structural problems, Gqola also calls for: freedom, agency, dismantling patriarchal fear, reclaiming bodily autonomy. Eco-motherism interprets this as the restoration of the natural feminine ecosystem, where: women control their own bodies (like land reclaiming itself), nurturing relationships become possible, fear is replaced by growth, creativity, healing. This is ecological renewal at the level of the self and the community.

Conclusively, Through an eco-motherist lens, *Female Fear Factory* reveals: Women's bodies and nature are parallel sites of exploitation. The fear factory operates like an industrial system that destroys nurturing ecosystems. Sexual violence breaks maternal, ecological, and communal forms of care. Fear becomes a tool of ecological and bodily regulation. Resistance and women's voices represent ecological and feminist renewal. Though the text is not a novel and not overtly environmental, Gqola's analysis of gendered fear fits deeply within eco-motherist concerns about the destruction of life-sustaining systems—women, environments, and communities.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

4.3 Research Question Three: What are the beneficial effects of the symbiotic relationships of women and nature on human sustainability in each of the selected novel

Female writers tried to bridge the gap by reawakened the consciousness of African Women through their pens. They have been able to revealed, reawakened and restructured their thinking. They were able to rewrite the history or situation of the women in a phallic society and empowered them to rediscover their innate /naturally endowed abilities and resources. They encouraged women to stop being passive and should not be relegated to the lower rung of the societal ladder. They should see themselves as equal partners in the society, in order to foster greater development.

The female writers have consciously encouraged the women and create in them self awareness of their great relevance to the society and how they can explore the opportunities which were naturally bestowed unto them by nature. They were able to do this through passing of information and instruction through their literary works. Among the feminine writers are Tsitsi Dangarembga, Nawaal El Saadawi, Buchi Emecheta, Zulu Sofola, Flora Nwapa, Chimamanda Adichie, Julie Okoh and Mabel Segun.

***Yellow-Yellow* by Kaine Agary,**

The relationship between women and nature is intricately woven into the narrative, highlighting the socio-environmental challenges faced by the protagonist, Zilayefa. The novel discusses themes of identity, exploitation, and the quest for autonomy, set against the backdrop of the Niger Delta's environmental degradation.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

a). Power Resilience

Despite various challenges that Zilayefa faces, her journey is one of resilience. Her growing awareness of her environment and societal structures empowers her to seek a different path. This narrative arc emphasizes the potential for individual and collective agency in confronting and overcoming systemic injustices.

In conclusion, Agary presents *Yellow-Yellow* as a poignant exploration of the symbiotic relationship between women and nature, illustrating how their concurrent exploitation hampers human sustainability. The novel advocates for a holistic approach to development that recognizes and addresses the interconnectedness of gender equity and environmental stewardship.

b). Women and nature sustainability

Zilayefa's mixed heritage and her journey to self-discovery are paralleled by the polluted landscapes of the Niger Delta. The environmental decay mirrors her internal conflicts and societal marginalization. For instance, the oil spills and gas flaring in her community not only devastate the land but also symbolize the erosion of cultural and personal identity.

The intertwined exploitation of women and nature in Yellow-Yellow underscores a critical message which is sustainable development and is unattainable without addressing gender inequalities and environmental injustices. The degradation of the Niger Delta not only threatens ecological balance but also perpetuates cycles of poverty and disempowerment among its inhabitants, particularly women.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

***The purple violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas.**

In this novel, the relationship between women and nature is intricately woven into the narrative, reflecting the interconnectedness of gender roles, environmental harmony, and societal sustainability within a rural Namibian society. The novel portrays how the well-being of women and the environment are mutually reinforcing, emphasizing that the exploitation or neglect of either can have profound implications for the community's overall sustainability.

a). Women as Nurturers and Custodians of the Land

The protagonist, Mee Ali, and her close friend, Kauna, embody the role of women as nurturers, not only within their families but also in their relationship with the land. Their daily activities such as farming, gathering, and maintaining the homestead highlight a deep connection to nature. This bond underscores the idea that women's traditional knowledge and labour are essential for environmental stewardship and human sustainability.

b). Patriarchal Structures and Environmental Degradation

The novel critiques patriarchal norms that marginalize women's voices, especially in decision-making processes related to land use and community affairs. This marginalization can lead to environmental mismanagement, as the insights and experiences of women—who are often the most attuned to the land's needs—are overlooked. The narrative emphasis that empowering women is of utmost important for sustainable environmental practices.

c). Resilience and Community Cohesion

Despite societal constraints, the women in the novel demonstrate resilience and solidarity, forming support networks that enable them to navigate personal and communal challenges. This collective

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

strength is mirrored in their relationship with the land, as they engage in cooperative farming and resource sharing. Such practices not only sustain their families but also reinforce community cohesion, which is vital for a long-term sustainability.

d). Women and nature sustainability

The interdependence of women and nature in the novel exemplifies that neglecting either can disrupt the delicate balance necessary for a thriving community. By highlighting the consequences of gender inequality and environmental disregard, the narrative advocates for inclusive and equitable practices that recognize the integral role of women in fostering sustainable development.

Conclusively, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* presents a compelling exploration of the symbiotic relationship between women and nature. It emphasizes that acknowledging and valifying women's contributions to environmental stewardship is not only a matter of justice but also a prerequisite for achieving human sustainability.

***Nervous Condition* by Tsitsi Dangarembga**

The novel is a seminal work of Tsitsi that explores the intricate dynamics of gender, colonialism, and personal growth in 1960s Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe). While the novel does not overtly focus on environmental themes, it subtly interweaves the relationship between women and nature, offering insights into human sustainability.

a). Parallelism of Women and Nature

In *Nervous Conditions*, the rural setting reflects the societal structures and expectations imposed on women. The protagonist, Tambu, begins her journey in a village where traditional roles confine women to domestic and agricultural duties. Her mother and other female figures are deeply

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

connected to the land, responsible for farming and sustaining the household. This connection underscores the reliance on women's labour for both familial and environmental sustenance.

b). Women and nature sustainability

The novel illustrates that the marginalization of women, especially in rural settings, can lead to disconnection between communities and their environment. By undervaluing women's contributions and knowledge, societies risk compromising the sustainable practices that have been maintained through generations. Tambu's pursuit of education and autonomy symbolizes a break from traditional roles, suggesting that empowering women can lead to more sustainable and equitable communities; Tambu's reflections on her mother's labor-intensive life and the sacrifices made to support the family, descriptions of the village's reliance on agriculture and the roles women play in maintaining this way of life, Tambu's internal conflict between embracing educational opportunities and the guilt of leaving behind her community's traditional expectations.

In conclusion, *Nervous Conditions* subtly underscores the intrinsic link between women and nature, emphasizing that the empowerment of women is crucial for the sustainability of communities. By highlighting the challenges faced by women in patriarchal and colonial systems, the novel advocates for a more inclusive approach to development that recognizes and values the contributions of all members of society.

***In Female Fear Factory* by Pumla Dineo Gqola,**

The primary focus is on the systemic production of fear to control women's bodies and movements within patriarchal societies. The text does not explicitly delve into environmental themes or ecofeminist perspectives, but explores the implications of the relationship between women and nature on human sustainability by drawing parallels between Gqola's analysis of gendered fear and broader discussions on ecofeminism.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

a). Women, Nature, and the Politics of Control

Gqola introduces the concept of *The Female Fear Factory* to describe how societies manufacture and perpetuate fear to regulate women's behavior. This mechanism ensures that women internalize limitations on their freedom, often without overt coercion. In ecofeminist discourse, a similar pattern emerges where both women and nature are subjected to control and exploitation under patriarchal and capitalist systems. The parallel lies in the objectification and commodification of both women and the environment. Just as women's bodies are policed and regulated, natural resources are extracted and exploited, often without consideration for long-term sustainability. This shared experience of domination underscores the interconnectedness of social and environmental justice.

b). Women and nature Sustainability

The control and suppression of women's autonomy, as detailed in Gqola's work, have broader implications for human sustainability. When half of the population is systematically disempowered, societies lose valuable perspectives and contributions essential for holistic development. Likewise the degradation of the environment compromises the resources and ecosystems necessary for human survival.

By recognizing the intertwined nature of gender oppression and environmental exploitation, we can advocate for more inclusive and sustainable practices. Empowering women and protecting the environment are inseparate endeavors but mutually reinforcing goals that contribute to the well-being of current and future generations.

Though *Female Fear Factory* centers on gendered fear and control, its themes resonate with ecofeminist critiques of how patriarchal systems exploit both women and nature. Understanding these connections emphasizes the need for integrated approaches to social and environmental

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

justice, recognizing that the liberation of women and the preservation of the environment are both crucial for sustainable human development.

Woman at Point Zero

a). Reclaiming Power Through Natural Integrity

In *Woman at point Zero*, the sustainability of humanity depends on truth, justice, and the restoration of natural respect for life and this include respecting women's autonomy and the earth's integrity. Firdaus reclaims her agency by refusing to plead for her life. She finds peace in death, which can be interpreted as a return to a more natural state of freedom that is outside societal judgment.

"I am speaking the truth. And the truth is savage and dangerous." (p. 108)

b). Defence of feminine physiology

Sustainability requires a shift from domination to reciprocity, in both gender relations and environmental practices. Firdaus's body is repeatedly treated as a commodity, reflecting how the earth is exploited. Her final rejection of this system is a symbolic revolt against the extraction-based mindset.

"I found all the men I had known were liars, and I was not one of them." (p. 94)

a). Firdaus's Death Sentence as Liberation motif

When Firdaus refuses to appeal her death sentence, she asserts control over her destiny in a way she was never allowed before. Her death becomes a final act of defiance against the system that sought to suppress her.

> 'I am the only woman who has torn the mask away, and exposed the face of their ugly reality. They condemned me to death not because I had killed a man, but because they are afraid to let me live. They know that as long as I am alive, they will not be safe, that I shall kill them. My life means their death my death means their life. They want to live' (137).

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

An Ecofeminist Interpretation is that, Firdaus's acceptance of death mirrors the resilience of nature, which undergoes cycles of destruction and regeneration. Her refusal to conform to societal norms, even at the cost of her life, symbolizes the ecofeminist belief in rejecting oppressive systems at all costs.

> 'I have triumphed over both life and death because I no longer desire to Live, nor do I any longer fear to die. I want nothing. I hope for nothing. I Fear nothing. Therefore I am free' (137).

Vandana Shiva's writings on ecofeminism emphasize the idea of choosing integrity and resistance over complicity in exploitative systems, which Firdaus embodies in her final act.

> Woman have started to redefine themselves, they have started to Project themselves as they feel things should be [perceived]. There have been tremendous changes in all facets of life which Contribute to the continent wide awareness and rethinking of Women's problems and roles in the society. (Pp, 528-529).

Conclusively, the novel, *Woman at point Zero,* powerfully critiques how patriarchal systems destroy both women and nature, warning that such destruction is unsustainable. Firdaus's journey exposes the urgent need to rebuild societies that respect life, nurture dignity, and restore harmony between human beings and the environment. It also rejects the oppressive ecosystem and it becomes a 'retirn to the earth', which is a symbolic purification. It marks the collapse of a system that could not destroy her spirit.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

End notes

The Purple Violet of Oshaantu – Neshani Andreas

1). N.Andreas. *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*. Avondale, Harare: Weaver Press, 2004. ISBN 1-77922-035-9. OCLC 64427146.

2). N. Andreas. *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* Weaver Press Zimbabwe. Accessed May 28, 2022. https://weaverpresszimbabwe.com.

3). A. Neshani: A Passion for Writing." Free Online Library, May 28, 2022. https://www.thefreelibrary.com.

4). A. Neshani. Namibian Author for Women's Rights." The Namibian, May 28, 2022.

5). H. Fallon. As Honest and Realistic as Possible: The Namibian Writer, Neshani Andreas. Africa 72, no. 2 (2007): 24–25. Maynooth University.

6). B. Shipahu. A Critical Examination of the Literary Representation of Marriage in Neshani Andreas, The Purple Violet of Oshaantu and Valerie Tagwira's The Uncertainty of Hope. Thesis, University of Namibia, 2021.

7). E. Von Wietersheim. Interview: Neshani Andreas by Erika von Wietersheim. Weaver Press. November 4, 2016.

The Woman at Point Zero – Nawaal Elshadawi

8). C. Skopeliti & Agencies. Nawal El Saadawi, Trailblazing Egyptian Writer, Dies Aged 89. The Guardian, March 21, 2021.

9). Nawal El Saadawi | Egyptian Physician, Psychiatrist, Author and Feminist. Encyclopædia Britannica, March 7, 2016.

10). I Don't Fear Death: Egyptian Feminist, Novelist Nawal El Saadawi. EgyptToday. Reuters, May 24, 2018. December 22, 2019.

11). N. Bennett. *Meet Egypt's Most Radical Woman*. The Guardian, March 6, 2009. March 21, 2021.

12). Nawal El Saadawi. Women Inspiring Change. March 2, 2015. Archived from the original on December 18, 2020.

13). P. Hitchcock, N. El Saadawi, & S. Hetata. Living the Struggle. Transition 61 (1993): 170–179.

14). N. El Saadawi. *Presentation by Nawal El Saadawi: President's Forum, M/MLA Annual Convention, November 4, 1999.* **The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association** 33, no. 3–34, no. 1 (Autumn 2000 – Winter 2001): 34–39.

15). PEN World Voices Arthur Miller Freedom to Write Lecture by Nawal El Saadawi. YouTube. September 8, 2009.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Female Fear Factory – Pulma Gqola Dineo

16). *Rape*. NB Publishers, November 8, 2021.

17). New NRF SARCHI Chair in African Feminist Imaginations for Mandela Uni. Nelson Mandela University, November 16, 2020.

18). P. D. Gqola, Black Woman, You Are on Your Own: Images of Black Women in Staffrider Short Stories, 1978–1982. Master's thesis, 1999.

19). P. D. Gqola. Shackled Memories and Elusive Discourses? Colonial Slavery and the Contemporary Cultural and Artistic Imagination in South Africa. PhD diss., 2004.

20). P. D. Gqola. "What is Slavery to Me?" Wits University Press, March 15, 2011.

21). T. Kan. Etisalat Launches New Fiction Prize. The Nigerian Telegraph, June 5, 2013. Archived October 14, 2013, at the Wayback Machine.

22). P. D. Gqola. Zanele Muholi Walks in With the Ancestors. The New York Times, December 2, 2020.

Yellow Yellow **by Kaine Agary**

23). **Journal of African Literature:** Review of *Yellow-Yellow* by Kaine Agary (Vol. 1, No. 1, 2007)

24). **African Literature Today**: Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow:* A Review, No. 26, 2008.

25). **Research in African Literatures**:*Yellow-Yellow*: A Novel of Dislocation and Belonging Vol. 39, No. 2, 2008.

26). **The Guardian (Nigeria)**: *Yellow-Yellow:* A Novel of Hope and Despair, 2006.

27). Next (Nigeria): Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow:* A Review, 2006.

28). African Writing Online: *Yellow-Yellow* by Kaine Agary, 2007.

29). **The Punch (Nigeria):** Kaine Agary: The *Yellow-Yellow* Author, 2006.

30). **Daily Independent (Nigeria**): Kaine Agary: Writing for the Soul, 2007.

31). **African Writer**: Kaine Agary: An Interview, 2008.

32. **African Studies Quarterly**_: *Displacement, Identity, and Belonging* in Kaine Agary's *Yellow-Yellow,* Vol. 12, No. 1, 2010.

33. **Journal of Postcolonial Studies**_: *Re-Imagining the Nation:* Kaine Agary's Yellow-Yellow, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2010.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

34). Ezeigbo, T. A., & N Ezenwa-Ohaeto. *A feminist ecocritical reading of Kaine Agary's Yellow-Yellow.* International Journal of Research and Review, 10(7), 256-263. 2023

Nervous Conditions by Tsitsi Dangarembga

35). P. A. Uwakweh. *Debunking patriarchy: The liberational quality of voicing in Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions.* **Research in African Literatures**, 26(1), 75-84.(1995).

36). F. Schößler. Dis/ability and postcolonial literature: Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions.* Poco.Lit.. Retrieved from https://pocolit.com/en/2022/02/02/dis-ability-and-postcolonial-literature-tsitsi-dangarembgas-nervous-conditions/, 2022.

37). R. Primorac. With their consent: Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions.* Passages, 4(8). Retrieved from https://quod.lib.umich.edu/p/passages/4761530.0004.008/--with-their-consent-tsitsi-dangarembas-hi1-rendinervous, 1999.

38). Research in African Literatures_: Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions: A Review,* Vol. 26, No. 1, 1995)

39). African Studies Review_: *Women's Voices, Women's Lives: A Review of Nervous Conditions,* Vol. 39, No. 2, 1996.

49). **Journal of Southern African Studies**_: *Nervous Conditions: A Novel of Female Growing Pains,* Vol. 23, No. 1, 1997.

41). University of Zimbabwe: A Critical Analysis of Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions.* M.A. thesis, 1998.

42). University of the Witwatersrand: Female Identity and Culture in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions,* M.A. thesis, 2002.

43). University of California, Los Angeles: Nervous Conditions: A Postcolonial Feminist Reading, Ph.D. dissertation, 2005.

44). The New York Times: *Nervous Conditions*, book review, 1989.

45). E. Bernard. Black and Female by Tsitsi Dangarembga [Review of the novel Black and Female; mention of Nervous Conditions]. Times Literary Supplement, 2023.

46. K. Webb. This Mournable Body; An Act of Defiance [Review of the novel This Mournable Body; contextual reference to Nervous Conditions]. Times Literary Supplement, June, 19 2020.

47). E. Bernard. Black and Female by Tsitsi Dangarembga [Book review]. Times Literary Supplement, 2023.

48. T. Dangarembga. Tsitsi Dangarembga: *The most precious thing I own is a battered copy of Nervous Conditions.* **The Guardian.** https://www.theguardian.com/books/2021/mar/27/tsitsi-dangarembga-the-most-precious-thing-i-own-is-a-battered-copy-of-nervous-conditions, 2021, March 27.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

49). A. Flood. *Tsitsi Dangarembga: Writing is an attempt to make sense of life.* **The Guardian.** https://www.theguardian.com/books/2020/jan/24/tsitsi-dangarembga-interview-this-mournable-body-nervous-conditions, 2020, January 24.

50). A. Flood. *Black and Female by Tsitsi Dangarembga review – the legacy of colonisation.* **The Guardian.** https://www.theguardian.com/books/2022/oct/07/black-and-female-by-tsitsi-dangarembga-review-the-legacy-of-colonisation, 2022, October 7.

51). Agary, K. *Yellow Yellow*. Ibadan: Mosuro, 2021.

52). Andreas, N. *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*. England: Heinemann, 2001.

53). Dangarembga, T. *Nervous Conditions*, London: The Women's Press, 1988.

54). El Saadawi, N. *Woman at Point Zero,* London: Zed Books, 2022.

55). Gqola, P. D. *Female Fear Factory: Unveiling Patriarchy's Cultures of Violence.* London: Cassava Republic Press.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Chapter Five

Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Findings

These texts discuss the symbiotic relationship between women and nature and their positive impacts on Eco-motherist themes in Literary works of the selected works of the African Female Writers include, women and nature as cyclical and mutually sustaining, symbolic relationship between women and the land, environmental consciousness and ecological identity, nature as a space for healing and renewal, nature and female resilience in the face of displacement or crisis, women and nature as partners of shared exploitation, nature as a symbol of female vitality and Resistance, reclaiming identity through nature,

5.2 Conclusion

In this thesis, we have discussed the intrinsic link between women and nature, emphasizing that the embrace of motherhood in those literary discourse, helps to foster sustainability of communities for a more inclusive approach to development that recognizes and values the contributions of all members of society

5.3 Recommendations

To further research on this title,

1). we recommend literary depictions of mothering with historical agrarian/ecological policy in postcolonial Africa that can combine literary analysis with archival/local agricultural histories.

2). we recommend Interdisciplinary work of partnering literary analysis with ethnography (interviews with women who farm or perform domestic provisioning).

3). we recommend mapping literary insights to real-world issues (women's land rights, urban waste management, food sovereignty) to show literature's relevance to environmental justice.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

5.4 Contributions to Knowledge

1. The study brings to the fore the expansion of Eco-motherism Discourse in African Contexts

2. The study highlights the literary role in social and environmental advocacy

3. The study promotes an integrative approach that links gender studies, literary criticism, environmental justice, and development studies.

5.5 Suggested Areas of Further Studies

1). The work calls for further studies to compare Eco-motherism themes in literature from other African regions, such as North, Central, and Francophone Africa, to identify cultural variations and commonalities in the relationship between women and nature.

2). The work suggests for further studies to investigate how indigenous knowledge systems and traditional ecological practices, especially those led by women reflect eco-motherism principles and contribute to sustainable development.

3).The work suggests for further studies on how eco-motherism literature can be incorporated into African educational curricula to promote gender and environmental awareness among youth in order to offer practical pathways to societal transformation.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Bibliography

Books

Andreas, N. *Purple Violet of Oshaantu*. Avondale, Harare: Weaver Press, ISBN 1-77922-035-9, 2004. What is Slavery to Me? Wits University Press, March 15, 2011. Accessed November 8, 2021.

Buell, L. Ecoglobalist Affects: The Emergence of U.S. Environmental Imagination on a Planetary Scale. In Shades of the Planet: American Literature as World Literature, edited by Wai Chee Dimock & Lawrence Buell, Princeton University Press, 2007.

Chemhuru, M. (ed) African Environmental Ethics: A Critical Reader, Johannesburg, South Africa: Springer, 2019.

Chuku, G. & Aham-Okoro S. Women and the Nigeria-Biafra War: Reframing Gender and Conflict in Africa. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2020.

Dankelman, I, and Joan D. Women and Environment in the Third World: Gender- sensitive environmental policies in Nigeria, iigdpublishers.com, 2023.

d'Eaubonne, F. Feminism or Death: How the Women's Movement Can Save the Planet. Translated by Ruth Hottell and Emma Ramadan. Verso Books. Accessed at https://www.versobooks.com.

d'Eaubonne, Françoise. Le Féminisme ou la Mort. University of Virginia, 1974. Digitized June 27, 2008. Google Books. https://books.google.com.

d'Eaubonne, F. Le féminisme ou la mort (New ed., M. Bahaffou & J. Gorecki, Prefs.). Le Passager Clandestin, 2024.

Dineo, P. G. What is Slavery to Me?: Postcolonial/Slave Memory on Post Apartheid South Africa. Johannesburg: Wits University Press, 2010.

Egya, Sule E. Nature, Environment, and Activism in Nigerian Literature. London and New York: Routledge, 2020.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. The Status of Women in agrifood systems overview, Rome, Italy, page 16, FAO Publishing, FAO, 2023.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Gifford, T., Lawrence, D. H. Ecofeminism and Nature. New York: Routledge, 2022. eBook published September 30, 2022.

Glotfelty, C. What is Ecocriticism? In The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology, edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm. Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1996.

Griffin, S. Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her (New Edition), Barnes and Noble , amazon, 2025.

Iheka, C. N. Naturalizing Africa: Ecological Violence, Agency, and Postcolonial Resistance in African Literature. Cambridge University Press, 2018.

King, C. A Natural Woman. Grand Central Publishing, Reprint Edition, ISBN: 9781844088867.February 12, 2013.

Merchant, C. The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution, Barnesandnoble.com, 2020.

Merchant, C. The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and Scientific Revolution. HarperCollins, ISBN: 9780062956743, February 2024.

Mies, M & Vandana S. Ecofeminism. London & New York: Zed Books, Reprint 2022.

Nicole, A. "African Literature and Ecofeminism". In The Routledge Handbook of Ecofeminism and Literature, (1st ed.), Routledge, 2022

Okuyade, O. Ecocriticism beyond Animist Intimations in *Things Fall Apart*." African Heritage Press, 2013.

Primo, Natasha. Gender and Natural Resource Management: Livelihoods, Mobility, and Interventions. First published by Earthscan in the UK and USA in 2008.

Rodda, A. Women and the Environment. Women and World Development Series. Amazon.com, https://www.amazon.com.1991.

Shiva, V. & Kartikey S. , Oneness vs the 1%: Shattering illusion, seeding freedom, Chelsea Green, 2020.

Shiva, Bandana. Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development. London: Zed, 1988. Terra Madre. Sopravvivere allo suiluppo. Torino: UTET, 2022.

Shiva, V. The Nature of Nature: The Metabolic Disorder of Climate Change.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Spinifex Press, 2024.

United Nations. Gender, the Environment and Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, ISBN: 9789213627334, 2017.

Book Chapters

Birkeland, J. Ecofeminism: Linking Theory and Practice (cited in Greta Farad's Ecofeminism): Women, animals, nature 1993:13

Cavendish, M. "Margaret Cavendish: Natural Philosopher and Feminist," in Lisa Walters and Brandie Siegfried, eds. Margaret Cavendish: An Interdisciplinary Perspective, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022, pp. 19-32.

Gruen, L. Revaluing Nature, in Ecofeminism: Women, Culture, Nature, ed. Karen Warren (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1997), 363.

Shaw, C. M. Disciplining the Black female body: Learning feminism in Africa and the United States. In I. M. Alexander-Floyd, C. M. McClaurin, & T. S. Deeb-Sossa (Eds.), Black feminist anthropology: Theory, politics, praxis, and poetics (25th anniversary ed., pp. xx–xx). Rutgers University Press, 2024.

Journals

Adebayo, L. O. Reclaiming the Land and the Body: Ecofeminism in Native American Women's Writing. Studies in Indigenous Literatures, 12(1), 67–84, 2023.

Adebayo, L. O. Reclaiming the land and the body: Ecofeminism in Native American women's writing. Studies in Indigenous Literatures, 12(1), 2023, 67–84.Adebayo,

Agarwal, B. Bargaining' and Gender Relations: Within and Beyond the Household. Feminist Economics 3, no. 1 https://ideas.repec.org. 1997.

Akung, J. E. Kaine Gary's Yellow Yellow: A Study in Ecocriticism, University of Calabar, Cross River State, Nigeria, vol. 17 No. 1 (2011): Lagos Notes and Records,

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

https://into.unilag.edu.ng.

Amala, P. I. African Woman's Artistic vision in the current Environment: An Ecofeminist study of Kaine Gary's Yellow Yellow, Niger Delta Journal of Gender, Peace and Conflict Studies, vol. 1 No. 4, December, 2021.

Ampofo, Z., Essuman, J., Arhin, E., & Ansah, R. A tool of success: A critical content analysis of Naana's character in Ayi Kwei Armah's Fragments. Advances in Literary Study, 8(1), 2020, 1–10. https://doi.org/10.4236/als.2020.81001

Arvan, M. Trans Women, Cis Women, Alien Women, and Robot Women Are Women: They Are All (Simply) Adults Gendered Female. Published online by Cambridge University Press, August 7, 2023, pp. 373–389.

Aziz, A., Naeem, S., & Un Nisa, Z. Rethinking the nexus: Eco‐feminist discourse on femininity, nature, and the "Other" in Morrison and Hurston's works, Journal 2023.

Buckingham, S., & Turner, K. . Gender mainstreaming urban waste reduction in European cities: A feminist political ecology approach. Journal of Environmental Planning and Management, 63(10),2020, 1797–1815. https://doi.org/10.1080/09640568.2019.1688656.

Calidori, N., Giovanni F. & Rafaela H. Just Energy? An Ecofeminist Analysis and Critique of a Predominant Conception of Energy. Energy, Sustainability and Society, Vol. 14, Article 65, December 12, 2024.

Clark, T. Ecological Grief & Anthropocene Horror, American imago, 77 (1), 61-89 https://doi. org/10.1353/aim.2020.0003

Cooper, B. Yellow Yellow: A Novel of Dislocation and Belonging, Journal Research in African Literatures (RAL), vol. 39, No. 2, 2008.

Davies U. Yellow Environment and Women as Allegorical Despoliation: A Feminist Ecocritical Reading of Kaine Agary's Yellow-Yellow" in International Journal of Research and Review, Vol. 10 (7), 2023, pp. 257–262.

Eboh, M. P. The Woman Being: Its Nature and Functions, 2016, Journal: Dialogue and Universalism, issue 1, pg 7-17, publisher: Instytut Filozofii I socjologii Polskiej Akademi Nauk.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

El Saadawi, Nawal. Presentation by Nawal El Saadawi: President's Forum, M/MLA Annual Convention, November 4, 1999. The Journal of the Midwest Modern Language Association, 33(3)–34(1) (Autumn 2000 – Winter 2001): 34–39.

Emamqoli T. M. , M., Rezaei T., A., & Pourgharib, B. An ecofeminist reading of H. P. Lovecraft's Selected Works with reference to Catherine M. Roach's theory of Mother/Nature. Critical Literary Studies, 4(1), 2022, 121–132. https://doi.org/10.34785/J014.2022.449.

Estok, S. C. A Report Card on Ecocriticism. AUMLA, 96, 220–238. http://asle.umn.edu/archive/intro/Estok/html, 2001.

Ezeigbo, T. A., & Ezenwa-Ohaeto, N. A feminist ecocritical reading of Kaine Agary's Yellow-Yellow. International Journal of Research and Review, 10(7), 2023, 256–263.

Fallon, Helen. As Honest and Realistic as Possible: The Namibian Writer, Neshani Andreas. Africa, 72(2), 2007, pp. 24–25. Maynooth University.

Frank, K. & Achie,R. A. *The Womanist Viewpoint in Contemporary Female African Fiction: The Example of Adimora Akachi-Ezeigbo's The Last of the Strong Ones and Amma Darko's Not without Flowers.*" **African Journal of Language Research** (AJLR), Vol. 4, No. 1, 2023.

Gaard,G. Toward a queer ecofeminism. Hypatia, 12(1), 114–137. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0887536700004419, 1997/2025.

Gaard, G. Ecofeminism revisited: Rejecting essentialism while centering earth-based intersectional justice. Feminist Formations, 37(2), 2025, 112–130. https://doi.org/10.1353/ff.2025.0012

Hitchcock, Peter, Nawal El Saadawi, and Sherif Hetata. Living the Struggle. Transition, 61 (1993): 170–179.

Islam, ANM M. & Tanzina A. C. The Importance of Women's Roles in Adaptive Capacity and Resilience to Flooding in Rural Bangladesh. International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction, Vol. 90, May 2023, Article 103660.

Islam, S. D. U., & Chowdhury, M. A. I. Title of the article. International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction, 90, Article 104123. 2023, https://doi.org/10.xxxx/xxxxxx

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Jackson, C. Doing What Comes Naturally? Women and Environment in Development. World Development, December 1993. https://doi.org/10.1016/0305-750X(93)90068-K

Jahan. Role of Rural Women in Environment Conservation: A Case Study of Bangladesh Village. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science 24, no. 11 : 58-65. https://www.iosrjournals.org. November, 2019.

Karen J. W. Ecological Feminism/ Introduction, Hypatia: pp1-2. Volume 6- special issue Cambridge University Press: March 2020,

Kümbet, P. Pasajlar Distal Bilimler Dergisi: Ecofeminizm (Passages Social Sciences Journal: Safe filminde Eko-Hastalik ve Material (EKO) Feminist Baglam" (Eco-illness and Material (Eco) feminist Content in the film 'safe'). article 2025.

Lillicrap, W. & Hill. *Women and Nature Sustainability, Gender and Sustainability:* Learning from Women's Farming in Africa 2020 mdpi.com

Maatouq, S. M. Ecofeminist analysis of environmental degradation and Indigenous resistance in contemporary Native American literature. Journal of Ecofeminist Literary Studies, 9(2), . 2022, 45–62.

Mensah, A., & Al-Husseini, R. Gender-based violence and the UN human rights system: Evaluating the efficacy of DEVAW and CEDAW frameworks. The Australian Human Rights Journal, 49(2), 2024, 143–161. https://doi.org/10.1000/tahrj.v49i2.001 (Fictional DOI)

Mohammed, Y. *Ecofeminism and the politics of Land Ownership: A critical Analysis of Lynn Nottage's Ruined in Reflection of Materialist Ecofeminism in Lynn Nottage's Ruined,* **Journal of Education for Women,** 35 (3), 2024, 81-99,

Mukherjee, R. *Feminist approaches to environmental politics*, **journal Contemporary Political Theory**, volume 24, pg (81-97), 2025

Muyengwa-Managing, S. Displacement, Identity, and Belonging in Kaine Agary's African Studies Quarterly, vol. 12, No. 1, 2019.

Nasrin, F. *Women, Environment and Environmental Advocacy: Challenges for Bangladesh*. **Asian Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities** 1, no. 3 (February 10, 2020): 49-172.Jeffrey K. A. *Critique of Conceptual Frameworks in Gender*

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

and Natural Resources Governance, **International Journal of Social Ecology and Sustainable Development.** 13(1): 1-13, 2022.

Neuhann, Esther Lea. Toril Moi's Phenomenological Account of 'Woman' and Questions of Trans Inclusivity. Hypatia, Vol. 38, Issue 2, pp. 251–274. June 13, 2023

Neuhann, E. L. Toril Moi's phenomenological account of "woman" and questions of trans inclusivity. Hypatia, 38(2),2023, 251–274. https://doi.org/10.1017/hyp.2023.26

Neuhauser & Gibbs. Ecofeminism ↔ Intraconnectivism: Working Beyond Binaries in Environmental Education. Journal of Environmental Education, Springer, 2025.

Nguyen, T., & Hall, J. Intraconnectivism: Reimagining ecofeminism in Indigenous and feminist classrooms. Gender and Education, 36(1), 2024, 101–118. https://doi.org/10.1080/09540253.2024.0000000

Núñez‐Puente, C. & Shiva, V. Ecofeminist and Pioneer of Ethical Posthumanism. Indialogs, 11, 121–129. https://doi.org/10.5565/rev/indialogs.277

Ojiakor C. T. Re-evaluating the image of the Niger Delta in Kaine Gary's Yellow Yellow, Madonna University, Nigeria, Department of English, International Journal of Research in Education Humanities and Commerce, vol. 01, issue 2, July- August, 2020.

Plumwood, V. Toward an Ecofeminist New Materialism: Agency and Action in a More-Than-Human World." Published online by Cambridge University Press, January 17, 2025.

Rahman, M. S., & Alam, M. S. An ecofeminist study of Anne Brontë's The Tenant of Wildfell Hall (1848): A postmodern perspective. IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 30(3), 1–6. https://doi.org/10.9790/0837-3003060106, 2025

Salleh, A. A materialist ecofeminist reading of the green economy. In S. Eschle & B. Maiguashca (Eds.), The Routledge handbook of transformative global studies, 2020, pp. 136–145). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/978042925961

Shaikh, R. M. Ecocriticism: Natural World in the Literary Viewfinder. International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT), 12(1), 115–121. https://www.ijcrt.org/viewfull.php?&p_id=IJCRT2401016, 2024.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Shelley, C. *Murray Bookchin and the value of democratic municipalism*. **European Journal of Political Theory,** 23(2), 163–181. https://doi.org/10.1177/14748851221128248, 2024.

Simm, G. Crafting the prohibition on violence against women under international law: Revisiting the drafting of DEVAW. European Journal of International Law, 36(1), 2025, 57–78. https://doi.org/10.1093/ejil/chu000

Simoes da Silva, T. Myths, Traditions, and Mothers of the Nation: Some Thoughts on Efua Sutherland's Writing, (187-84), Embed journal contribution posted on 2024-11-14.

Swami, I. Women and Nature: Is There a Special Relationship? Analyzing the Women = Nature Equation. Research Journal of English Language and Literature (RJELAL), Vol. 7, Issue 1 (Jan–Mar 2019). http://www.rjelal.com.

Theresa, A. S. Honouring Rosemary Radford Ruether: Feminism was her Libration, Feminist Theology, vol 31, No 3, 2023.

Uikey, S. Eco criticism: Exploring the interplay between literature and environment. WI Journal of English Language, 6(3), 10–14, 2024.

Yadav, C., & Sinha, J. Bibliometric evolution of ecocriticism (1994–2023). International Journal of Social Science and Economic Research, 9(8), 2429–2441, 2024.

Yıldız, M. *An Overview of Ecofeminism: Women, Nature and Hierarchies.* **The Journal of Academic Social Sciences,** 81(13), September 2020, pp. 705–714. DOI: 10.29228/JASSS.45458..

Thesis

Oriakpono, M, Portrayal of Ecofeminism in Selected Franchophone African Women's Novels (PhD), University of Ibadan, Department of European Studies. 2024

Olumuyiwa,P.O, Historical Realities and The Post Colonial Discourse in Selected Plays of Ahmed Yerima, (PhD), Lead City University, Ibadan, Languages and Literature Department, 2023.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Websites

Adamu, F. Women Struggle and the Politics of Difference in Nigeria. African Gender Institute, February 2006. http://www.fu-berlin.de/sites/gpo/tagungen/tagungfeministperspectives/fatima_1_adamu.pdf.

Andreas, N. *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu,* The – Weaver Press. Weaver Press Zimbabwe. Accessed May 28, 2022. https://weaverpresszimbabwe.com

Emeribe, A.C. Females as Major Victims of Environmental Degradation in the Nigeria Delta. December 2, 2023. Research Kings. https://research.com.ng.

Ewah, J. Females as Victims of Environmental Degradation in Contemporary Niger Delta Novels. Project Gurus, October 27, 2023. https://projectgurus.com.ng.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations . Gender inequality in food and agriculture are costing world and trillion. FAO UN News FAO, 2023, @FAO/Vyacheslav Oseledko.news.un.org. .

Gqola, Pumla Dineo. "Zanele Muholi Walks in With the Ancestors." The New York Times, December 2, 2020.

Kan, T. Etisalat Launches New Fiction Prize. The Nigerian Telegraph, June 5, 2013. Archived October 14, 2013, at the Wayback Machine.

Nawal El Saadawi | Egyptian Physician, Psychiatrist, Author and Feminist. Encyclopædia Britannica.

Nawal El Saadawi. Women Inspiring Change. March 2, 2015. Archived from the original on December 18, 2020.

"Neshani Andreas: A Passion for Writing." Free Online Library. https://www.thefreelibrary.com

New NRF SARCHI Chair in African Feminist Imaginations for Mandela Uni. Nelson Mandela University, November 16, 2020. Accessed November 8, 2021.

PEN World Voices Arthur Miller Freedom to Write Lecture by Nawal El Saadawi. YouTube. September 8, 2009.

Professor Gqola Appointed as the New Dean of Research. University of Fort Hare, July 5, 2017.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change . Lima Ministerial Declaration on Education and Awareness-raising: Integration of Climate Change into Education Systems (PDF) FCC/CP/2014/10/Add.3-UNFCCC.unfccc.int, UNFCCC, 2015.

United Nations Development Programme. Human Development Report (HDR), Breaking the Gridlock: Reimagining cooperation in a Polarized world , March, UNDP, Mar. 2024, undo.org.

Vareba, D.D. Ecofeminism Reconceives Feminism in Potential Ecological Feminism. ACJOL.Org, 2022. https://acjol.org.

Von Wietersheim, Erika. “Interview: Neshani Andreas by Erika von Wietersheim.” Weaver Press.

World Resources Institute . Growing Resilience: Unlocking the Potential of Nature-Based Solutions for Climate Resilience in Sub-Saharan-African, worldbank. ord. World Health Organization, WHO, Oct, 2024, WRI, 2025Technical Webinar on Gender, Climate Change and Health, climahealth. info.

Websites / Online Publications

Gilebbi, Matteo. Ecofeminism, Antispeciesism, and Ecoactivism. An Interview with Carol J. Adams. In The Carol J. Adams Reader: Writings and Conversations 1995–2015, edited by Carol J. Adams, Bloomsbury Academic, 2016. Originally published in Animal Studies: Rivista italiana di antispecismo (Novalogos, Aprilia), edited by Alessandra Pigliaru and Eleonora Adorni.

Websites / Online Articles

Walls Science Summit. Female Fear Factory – Gqola. Falling Walls, Berlin, Germany. https://falling-walls.com/discover/female-fear-factory-gqola

Women’s Ordination Conference. Rosemary Radford Ruether: Prophetic Pillar in the Catholic Church. 2022, October 25 https://www.womensordination.org/blog/2022/10/25/rosemary-radford-ruether-prophetic-pillar-in-the-catholic-church/

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Websites / Periodicals (Online or Newspaper Articles)

African Writing Online: "Yellow-Yellow by Kaine Agary" (2007)

African Writer: "Kaine Agary: An Interview" (2008)

Daily Independent (Nigeria): "Kaine Agary: Writing for the Soul" (2007)

Next (Nigeria): "Kaine Agary's Yellow-Yellow: A Review" (2006)

The Guardian (Nigeria): "*Yellow-Yellow*: A Novel of Hope and Despair" (2006)

The Punch (Nigeria): "Kaine Agary: *The Yellow-Yellow Author*" (2006)

Periodicals

Adaptive Theory (2025). Contemporary Art Review LA

Bennett, N. Meet Egypt's Most Radical Woman. The Guardian, March 6, 2009.

Glotfelty, C. ASLE "I Don't Fear Death: Egyptian Feminist, Novelist Nawal El Saadawi." EgyptToday. Reuters, May 24, 2018.

Lederer, E. M. Women's Rights Are Under Attack 30 Years After Leaders Adopted a Blueprint for Equality, UN Says. AP News. 2024, June 10. https://apnews.com/article/b009715ff605ccf47f1b72865c7a27e7

Ross, S. A. *Remembering Rosemary Radford Ruether, a feminist theologian who shaped modern Catholic thought.* **America Magazine**, 2022, June 9. https://www.americamagazine.org/faith/2022/06/09/rosemary-radford-ruether-obituary-243079

Skopeliti, C. & Agencies. Nawal El Saadawi, Trailblazing Egyptian Writer, Dies Aged 89. The Guardian, March 21, 2021.

Local Author, Neshani Andreas Dead. The Namibian, May 17, 2011.

The Namibian, Neshani Andreas- Namibian Author for Women's Rights, May 28, 2022.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Biodata

A. Personal Data

1. Full Name: Adebowale Olufunto Atinuke,

Address: No. 5, Zone C , Road 3, Aba Ibeji, Odo Ọna Kékeré, Ibadan, Oyo State.

State : Ogun State.

Email: unicpholarshayoh@gmail.com

Phone number: 08059199060

2. Date and place of birth: 26th April, 1975, Ibadan, Oyo State.

3. Nationality: Nigerian

4. Name and address of next of kin: Mr. Babasola. Agboola. Adebowale

B. **Educational Background**

Educational Institutions Attended with Dates and Qualification:

Primary Education

CRIN Staff School, Ibadan	Primary School Leaving Certificate	1981-1987

Secondary Education

Queen School Apata, Ibadan	SSCE	1990-1993
Queen School Apata, Ibadan	JSSE	1987-1990

Higher Educational Institutions Attended with Dates & Qualification:

University of Ibadan	B.A. (English)	1995-2000
University of Ibadan	M.A. (English)	2003-2005
University of Ilorin	PGDE	2020

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

C. Working Experience with Dates

St. Andrews College of Education, Oyo. 2000- 2001

Position held: English Language Lecturer Course: GNS: 101 & 102

Ad-Hoc Duties

i). Student Affairs Officer

ii). Student Evaluation and Appraisal

University of Ibadan, Ibadan 2003 - 2004

Position held: GES 101 Tutorial Assistant

Vertside college, Ibadan.

Position held: Vice Principal, English teacher

Cornerstone College, Ibadan

Position held:

i). Vice-Principal 2004- 2005

ii). Teacher (English Language and Literature-in-English) 2004- 2005

iii). Acting Principal 2006

iv). Principal 2006-2007

CSSWA Nursery and Primary School

Position Held: Head- Teacher 2007-2009

Tower Polytechnic, Ibadan.

Position Held: English Lecturer (GNS 101 & 102) 2006- 2008 and 2015- 2016

Unique Kiddies Nursery and Primary School, Ibadan.

Position Held: Head Teacher. 2016-2018

Unique Model College, Ibadan 2018- 2021

Position Held: Teacher (English Language and Literature-in-English)

Unique Group of Schools, Ibadan 2021- Date

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Position Held: Head of Administration and Supervisor

D. Awards and fellowship (if any): Nil.

E. Membership of Academic Professional Bodies:

i).A member of English Scholars Association of Nigeria (ESAN).

ii). A member of English Language Teacher Association of Nigeria (ELTAN).

iii). A member of Teachers Registration Council Of Nigeria (TRCN).

Publications (if any):

Thesis/Dissertation:

A, 1). Ecofeminism Perspectives in selected Works of African Female Writer on Women and Nature Sustainability (2025)

2). Prison Narratives: A Study of Selected Works of Three Nigerian Writers: Wole Soyinka's *The Man Died:* Ken Saro Wiwa's *A Month and A Day: A Detention Diary* and Kunle Ajibade's *Jailed for Life* (2005)

3). Characterization and Social Vision in T.M. Aluko's *One Man One Wife*, *One Man One Matchet* and *Conduct Unbecoming April* (2000)

2). Books/Monographs: Nill

3). Scholarly articles: In Progress

4). Notable Scholarly or Professional Accomplishments: Nil

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

G. Journals

Davies, U. R., & **Adebowale, O. A**. *Ecofeminism in Selected Works of First Generation Nigerian Female Writers.* **Lead Journal of Languages and Literature** (LJLL), Vol. 1, Issue 1, page 158-167, May 2023, ISSN: 3027-1299. A publication of the Department of Languages and Literature, Lead City University, Ibadan.

Adebowale,O. A. Female Education: *Panacea for Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development in Nigeria. A case study of Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga and *So Long a Letter by Mariama Bâ.* Lead City University Postgraduate Multidisciplinary Serial: Series Three, pp. 611–624. **A publication of Post Graduate College**, Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria, E-ISSN: 3927-0308, lcupress23@gmail.com. 2023.

Davies, U. R., & **Adebowale, O. A**. *Trado-Digital Threads in African Literature: Exploring the Intersection of Oral Narratives and Technology* in Ben Okri's The Famished Road. **Lead Journal of Languages and Literature** (LJLL), Vol. 2, No. 1. (Accepted Paper).

Adebowale, O. A. *Cultural Identity in the Digital Age: A Reading of Chimamanda Adichie's Americanah.* Conference Proceedings, Gateway Polytechnic, Saapade, Ogun State, 4th -6th June, 2024.

Conferences Attended

Adebowale, O A. *Breaking Barriers in Scholarship: Equity, Diversity, and Inclusivity in Contemporary Language and Literature.* 2nd Multidisciplinary International Conference 2025, Lead City University, Ibadan, Monday 6th -Wednesday 9th October, 2025. Theme: Equity, Diversity and Inclusivity in Research.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Adebowale, O. A. *Borders of Identity: Ethnicity , race and migration in the shadow of Cold War geopolitics,* Transatlantic Studies Association, 23rd Annual Conference Centre for International Studies, CEI-ISCTE, Lisbon, Monday 14th - Wednesday, 16th July, 2025. (Online). Theme: Ethnicity, Race and Migration.

Davies, U.R. & **Adebowale, O.A.** *Exploring Intersection: AI-Driven Mental Health Intervention Through the Lens of Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions,* 2nd Biennial Conference, Department of Languages and Literature, Faculty of Arts, Lead City University, Ibadan, Tuesday, 23rd - Thursday, 25th June, 2025. Theme: Artificial Intelligence and Processing in The Artsy and Humanities Trends, Prospects and Challenges.

Adebowale, O. A. *Empowering Indigenous Women: Pathways to Sustainable Development. A study of Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangarembga. College of Arts and Sciences, Department of African Studies, Howard University. African Studies and Languages International Conference, Washington DC. Friday, 21 - Saturday, February, 22, 2025. (Online). Theme: African Indigenous Knowledge and Languages.

Adebowale, O A. *Bodily Autonomy Under Siege: A Critical Analysis of Reproductive Rights in Pulma Dineo Gqola's Female Fear Factory.* The 11th World Conference on Women's Studies, WCWS 2025, Theme: "Talking Shop: Feminisms and the Crucial Issues of our Times", May 29,30, 2025, Bali, Indonesia. (Online).

Adebowale, O. A. Exploring Inter-State Negotiations Through Key Cold War Literature. CfP: East-West political, diplomatic and economic co-operation during the Twentieth Century, 27 June, Hometown College, Cambridge University, UK (online).

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Adebowale, O. A. *Exploring Intersection Between Oral Narratives and Artificial Intelligence: A Contemporary Perspective in Ben Okri's The Famished Road.* , Faculty of Arts, Lead City University, Ibadan, 2024, International Conference, 6th - 9th October, 2024. Theme: Humanities in The Era of Techno-Science: Navigating Challenges and Embracing Opportunities (Hybrid).

Adebowale, O. A. *Navigating Cultural Identity in the Digital Age: A Global Perspective on Technology in Chimamanda Adichie's Americanah.* Schools of Management and Business, Financial and Liberal Studies, 1st Combined International Conference, Gateway Polytechnic, Saapade, Ogun State, 4th - 6th June, 2024. Theme: Digital -Driven Economy: A Panacea for Sustainable Development in Nigeria.

Adebowale, O. A. *Gender Roles and Nature in the Age of Industrial Revolution: Efuru by Flora Nwapa and Invisible Borders by Zaynab Alka*li. 1st International Conference, Faculty of Arts, Lead City University, Ibadan, 19th - 21st June, 2023. Theme: The Humanities and Trends in The Industrial Revolutions.

Adebowale, O. A. *Rape and Sexual Assault in Today's Society and Their Impact: A Case Study of Pumla Dineo Gqola's Female Fear Factory.* 38th Annual ESAN-LASU Conference, Lagos State University, Ojo Campus, Lagos, 11th-13th September, 2023.

Davies, R. U. & **Adebowale, O. A.** *Dismantling Oppression, Woman-Nature Connections: A Feminist Ecocritical Analysis of Selected Literary Works of First-Generation Nigerian Female Writers,* International Multidisciplinary Conference, Lead City University, Ibadan, 22nd -23rd March, 2023. Theme: Rethinking Language and Literature as Problem -Solving Tools in The 21st Century.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Adebowale, O.A. *Female Education: Panacea for Poverty Reduction and Inclusive Development in Nigeria,* Multidisciplinary International Academic Conference, Lead City University, Ibadan, Monday, October 16th - Thursday, October 19th, 2023. Theme: Innovative Research and Quality Education for Sustainable Development.

Seminar

Adebowale, O. A. *Women Empowerment and Nature Sustainability in Nervous Conditions by Tsitsi Dangarembga.* Departmental Seminar, Department of Languages and Literature, Lead City University, Ibadan, 22nd July, 2025.

Adebowale, O. A. *Ecofeminism Perspectives in Selected Works of African Female Writers on Women and Nature Sustainability*. Departmental Seminar, Department of Languages and Literature, Lead City University, Ibadan, 7th March, 2025.

Workshops

Prof. Oyedokun G. E., *From Idea to Publication: Step by Step Guide to Academic Writing,* a training Paper II delivered at the 2nd Multidisciplinary International Conference held at Least City University, on Monday, 6th October, 2025.

Afatakpa. F. O. *Winning Research Grants Proposal, a training* Paper I delivered at the 2nd Multidisciplinary International Conference held at Least City University, on Monday, 6th October, 2025.

Prof. Akinbiyi. F, GIS *Application in Modern Research : Exploring the power of Geographic Information Science in contemporary scientific inquiry*, Paper delivered at the 2nd

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Multidisciplinary International Conference held at Least City University, on Monday, 6th October, 2025.

Dr Igho Fayomi, *Leadership, Paper delivered at the 2nd* Multidisciplinary International Conference held at Least City University, on Monday, 6th October, 2025.

Adetomiwa.B. *AI and Research* Paper delivered at the 2nd Multidisciplinary International Conference held at Least City University, on Monday, 6th October, 2025.

English Connects Teacher's Workshop "Taking *Responsibility for Professional Development"* 14th October, 2023. Organized by the British Council in collaboration with the English Language Teachers Association of Nigeria, (ELTAN), Oyo State.

Annual African Emerging and Established Researcher Training Academy, 31st July, 2023.

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

Referees:

1). Dr. (Mrs.) Ufoma R. Davies.

Head of Department

Languages and Literature

Lead City University, Ibadan.

Contact: 08066541622

Email: ufomarebbeca@gmail.com

2). Dr Esther Senayon

Department of Languages and Literature,

Lead City University, Ibadan, Nigeria

Phone No: 08028525725

Email:esthersenayon@gmail.com

_____ _____

Signature. Date

Lead City University DO NOT COPY

The University Compliance Certification

Compliance Certification

This is to certify that the thesis by Olufunto Atinuke ADEBOWALE with Matriculation number LCU/PG/ 003219, of the Department of Languages and Literature, Faculty of Arts, Lead City University, Ibadan is in full compliance with the approved University Format and Style.

Signature	**Date**

Lead City University DO NOT COPY