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An Analysis of Female Growth in *Gone with the Wind* from the Perspective of Eco-feminism

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Abstract

Gone with the Wind is a famous novel written by Margaret Mitchell, which tells the story of Scarlett and her struggles to find love and survive the upheavals of the American Civil War and its aftermath. This dissertation explores the growth of female characters, particularly Scarlett, from an ecofeminist perspective. Additionally, it analyzes how the growth reflects ecofeminism. Ecofeminism emphasizes the connection between nature and women and believes that women play an important part in ecological conservation. This dissertation also explores the connection between women and nature under patriarchy, and discusses the growth of two different women in this system, taking Ellen and Scarlett as examples to show the contrast between compromising and asserting oneself in the midst of oppression. By exploring the ecofeminism reflected in this novel, it has certain enlightenment for people to raise the awareness of environmental protection and social equity.

Keywords: Eco-feminism, patriarchy, nature

1. Introduction

This study aims to analyze how ecofeminism is reflected in the story by comparing the character growth of the two female characters in a patriarchal society. Through the analysis, this dissertation tries to answer the following questions:

1. How is ecofeminism reflected in the growth of Scarlett?
2. In this novel, what are the relations between nature and women under patriarchy?

It is hoped that the female growth as well as the connection between women and nature in the text will be fully explored and elaborated through the discussion. It is also hoped that this study will help people understand and appreciate the story.

The dissertation consists of six parts. The first part is a brief introduction to the writer and the novel to be analyzed, and the aims and objectives of this dissertation, as well as the organization of it. The second part reviews previous studies of the novel and

some theories of ecofeminism. The third part sets up the theoretical framework for the study, focusing on the connection between women and nature. The fourth part is the analytical part of this dissertation, which shows the differences of the character growth and changes between two female characters, in order to demonstrate the distinction between submission and revolt in the same oppressive environment. And the fifth part is the status and similarities of women and nature in patriarchal society. The last part is the conclusions and limitations in the study as well as some suggestions for future research.

2. Literature Review

Eco-feminism is becoming more and more influential in feminist and environmental campaigns, environmental thought, and eco-ethics, particularly in France, Germany, the Netherlands and the United States. Eco-feminism as a philosophical thought rose in the 1970s and flourished in the 1990s. The authors of three landmark texts in the development of human ecoculture after the 1960s were all feminists: they were the American biologist Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962), the British economist Barbara Ward's *We Have Only One Earth* (1972), and the former Norwegian Prime Minister Mrs. Brundtland's *Our Common Future* (1992). The ideas presented in these documents changed the inherent way of thinking of mankind and the history of human conservation of the ecological environment. Echoing this, since the 1970s, the Western women's movement has combined with the ecological movement to form the eco-feminist movement, a movement that includes many aspects of women's rights, environmental protection, scientific and technological views, treatment of laboratory animals, opposition to nuclear technology, and opposition to war, extending from opposition to gender social discrimination to opposition to human discrimination against ecological nature, linking the fight for equal social rights for men and women with ecological environmental protection. It links the fight for equal social rights for men and women with ecological environmental protection and enriches the connotation of ecological culture. Western eco-feminism is characterized by research in the fields of philosophy, ethics as well as culture, and has focused on these areas in the early years, and most of its achievements are now focused on them.

Influenced by the Western eco-feminism, the domestic research also starts from the philosophical and cultural aspects, and then studies the theoretical construction of eco-feminist literary criticism from the literary perspective. It is a unique and bright path that has been found in the process of 'turning outward' in literary studies. In recent years, eco-feminism has received more and more attention from domestic academic circles, and there are many articles about eco-feminism in the journal network and excellent master's thesis library. Many articles on ecofeminism have been published in authoritative journals such as *Foreign Social Sciences*, *Foreign Literary Studies* and *Foreign Literary Dynamics*. These articles are divided into two categories: those on philosophy and ethics, and those on ecofeminism related to literature, which mainly apply an ecofeminist perspective to the study of writers and works. Given that the research on ecofeminist literary criticism at home and abroad is still in its infancy and domestic research is weak, it is of some significance and value to make a study of literary criticism from an ecofeminist perspective, which has a strong academic frontier.

It is no doubt that *Gone with the Wind* holds a prominent place in American literature. However, many critics have questioned the literary value and outdated racial stance of *Gone with the Wind*.

For more than 60 years, the book has been ignored by scholarship. Although *Gone with the Wind* was neglected by scholars in its first years of existence, its detailed recollections of a bygone era, its narrative method, its compelling portrayal of typical human survival instincts, and its reflection of the ambivalence of romantic dreams, continue to captivate readers. In recent years, feminist scholars have become increasingly interested in exploring Mitchell's harsh criticism of feudal society, her unconventional portrayal of women, and her depiction of the Southern spirit. These explorations have helped to deepen the understanding of Mitchell's work. So far, many domestic scholars have studied this novel mainly from two perspectives. First, most of the study of this novel is about the ecological female consciousness. It focuses on the relationship between men and nature, which is interrelated and caring for each other. Some studies also claim that women and nature have similarity on status and fate, both of which is under the oppression of patriarchy. Second, some scholars focus on the oppression of people by patriarchal morality and values to discuss the ecofeminist ideas reflected in the novel, thus reminding people to pay attention to the neglected feminine principles, to change the traditional worldview, and alleviate the increasingly serious ecological crisis.

3. Methodology

Ecofeminism has been studied in various fields such as philosophy, ethics, and culture, while literature, as a cultural ideology, is closely related to the trends of the times and reflects, to a certain extent, the social trends and values of people. In the emergence and development of ecofeminist thinking, the concept of ecofeminism has also begun to influence literary creation and become one of the schools of literary criticism. Ecofeminist criticism not only explores the issue of human beings and nature in literature, but also simultaneously promotes human and environmental morality. It is worth noting that ecofeminist literary criticism is an important part of the ecofeminist discourse.

There is no clear, strict definition of ecofeminist literary criticism. In general, ecofeminist criticism is concerned with the connection and root causes of the double oppression of women and nature in literature under patriarchal conceptions and consciousness, and demands the recreation of the long-lost nature and women to construct ecofeminist literary criticism.

In literature, this connection is mainly symbolic. The earth, for example, is often compared to a mother, and women are often associated with water. Women are nature's careful caretakers, and nature is a refuge for women, comforting each other and relying on each other. Men often compare women not only to beautiful nature, but also to harsh, wild nature, such as a raging storm or a tossing sea. Whatever the metaphor, there is a clear overtone of male discursive control. In English literature, on the one hand, many animal words are used to denigrate women, such as cow, chick and serpent; on the other hand, feminine and sexist words are often used to depict nature, such as 'virgin forest' being cut down. The language that feminizes nature and naturalizes women not only reflects the domination and devaluation of women and nature, but also shows that the fate of women is inextricably linked to that of nature.

The critical approach of ecofeminism includes the following aspects: firstly, it conducts literary research from the dual perspective of nature and women, examining the "other", "marginal" and "dislocated" status of nature and women in literary

works, arousing people's understanding and respect for nature and women, and awakening people's awareness of ecological conservation and gender equality. Secondly, by re-evaluating the literary canon, eco-feminist criticism unearths writers and their works that have been buried or neglected, celebrates the ecological and feminine consciousness contained in these works, and criticizes the gender discrimination embodied in them, in order to rewrite literary history and reconstruct the literary canon on this basis. Third, it re-examines human culture. By re-examining literature from an environmental and gender perspective, ecofeminist criticism questions and deconstructs the prevailing dichotomies in Western thought, including humans and nature, women and men. Fourthly, the construction of a pluralistic concept of literary criticism with cross-interaction. Eco-feminist criticism is the intersection of ecological criticism and feminist criticism, while ecological criticism is the intersection of ecology and literary criticism, a criticism based on ecological philosophy and ecological ethics. It is an important goal of ecofeminist literary criticism to construct a pluralistic concept of cross-interaction between ecological philosophy, eco-ethics and feminist theory. This dissertation adopts these four approaches to explore the eco-feminist consciousness reflected in the growth of women in this novel.

4. Eco-feminist Awareness in *Gone with the Wind*

Ecofeminism wasn't a distinguishable theory when *Gone with the Wind* was published, but the novel does demonstrate the connections between gender structures and environmental issues. Studying the novel through an ecofeminist perspective highlights how women's struggles for power and environmental sustainability are interconnected. This novel highlights the interconnectedness between women and the natural world, emphasizing the role of women as caretakers and resource providers. However, it also shows how women's labor is often undervalued and taken for granted, resulting in a lack of recognition of women's contributions to society. This can be seen as a critique of a patriarchal system that devalues women's work and prioritizes men's contributions. The novel also explores the impact of environmental destruction on women's lives.

4.1. Women's Growth under Oppression-A Case Study of Ellen

Ecofeminist awareness in *Gone with the Wind* sheds light on how patriarchy has prevented women from developing and progressing. This novel demonstrates the experiences of women in the Southern United States before and after the Civil War, and emphasizes the ways how gender-based power dynamics restricted women's potential for growth and progress. A patriarchal worldview does not allow for a relationship between men and women to be equal, as men will always be in a dominant position, making it impossible for true harmony to be established. In the novel, Ellen does not marry Gerald for love, but for frustration and rebellion. "She's been in love with that wild buck of a cousin of hers, Philippe Robillard, for a year now, despite her family being at her morning and night to give him up" (Margret, 2018: 73). Her father and her other family do not allow her to marry someone that she actually is in love with or go into the convent at Charleston, but rather a forty-three planter. "The heartbreak and selflessness that she would have dedicated to the Church were devoted instead to the service of her child, her household and the man who had taken her out of Savannah and its memories and had never asked any questions"

(Margret, 2018:77). On the surface Ellen's married life is peaceful and harmonious, but actually she is not truly happy and joyful, though she devotes herself to being a 'good wife'. The tragedy is that she is not aware of the need to escape from the social order, but chooses to take things as they come. In her opinion, men are superior to women, and it is a woman's lot to be unhappy. In her youth, she had a sense of rebellion and the courage to pursue her true love, but this rebellion disappeared when she learned of her lover's death. Being in a patriarchal society, she is well aware of the unequal status of women, yet she still follows the rules. In the novel, Margaret Mitchell is unabashedly critical of patriarchal tyranny, pointing out that it was a man's world in which women were subordinate and needed to please men. That is, to please men and to be infinitely tolerant of them. It is evident from Ellen's traditional upbringing that most women were not raised to be independent thinkers in the society of the time, and their traditional upbringing was usually to be the grand dame, to carry the weight of a family while maintaining enough charm to attract men.

And Ellen is the "perfect victim". Ellen is a good mother and a competent wife, and while this is to be celebrated, she is denied the right to freedom. Throughout her life she aimed to raise her daughters as ladies, but in essence she is also pandering to the rules of a patriarchal society. Although her fairness, sincerity, tenderness and selflessness make her a respected and beloved woman, this does not conceal her tragic end. Even though Gerald's love for her is sincere, he could not fully understand her or make her truly happy. In fact, they are not on equal footing, so the marriage is not considered equal. However, Ellen is also opinionated in some respects and she is not ignorant. She takes care of all matters on the estate, not only keeping the accounts of the plantation but also taking daily reports from the overseers. And she is the head of the family, as her husband and daughters depend on her and she manages the main affairs of the estate. When she learns that Jonas has done something that goes against her sense of decency, she firmly decides to dismiss him.

In short, her family environment and the society in which she lives make her a proper lady, but she is also subordinate to men. Despite her intelligence, she is unable to break out of the shackles of a patriarchal society and, in teaching her own children, she is still guided by traditional morality in trying to raise her daughter to be a so-called lady and a proper wife. As a result, she is effectively oppressed by the rules of a male-dominated society.

4.2. The Growth of Scarlett under War

The growth of Scarlett under the War can reveal the effects of the Civil War's social and environmental changes on women's self-independence. In contrast to her mother Ellen's upbringing, Scarlett is rebel and asserts herself against the same social norms, while her mother chose to compromise and become an angel in the house.

Before the eruption of the Civil War, Scarlett was a naive and willful girl, who would only care about herself. What she did everyday was barbecue, balls and flirting with boys like other aristocratic young ladies. Pursuing love may be the biggest thing in her life at that time. She did not care about land at all when her father promised to give her Tara manor after he passed away. She is always rebellious and full of vitality. Compared with other girls, she climbs trees, throws rocks, and refuses to eat like a lady. But she is also attractive, delightful, and she never shies away from using her femininity to further her goals. She has inherited her

mother Ellen's charm and her Irish father's pride. There is a clear change in her personality around the arrival of the war.

4.2.1. Role Transformation

A key theme of this novel is the role of women in providing for their families and communities. As the war continues, women are forced to take on new responsibilities and roles. When men fight on the battlefield, they become the main providers of food, clothes and other resources. This role change provides an opportunity for women to show their skills and talents in new ways and challenge the traditional gender roles that limit women's roles to the family field.

Scarlett is transformed from a young girl to a widow, and despite the change in identity, her character remains the same. Young Scarlett is unable to get her own lover and willfully marries Charles, whom she does not love, and even gives birth to a child for him. Later she becomes a widow and she was not allowed to show her face in public, let alone do anything else that was considered out of the ordinary. However, Scarlett does not care about other's opinions as much as other women, she thinks it is unfair that women need to be widowed for so long, and she has the courage to do something deviant. In the history of Western civilization, nature has been seen as a voiceless other and an object of exploitation and subjugation, forced to become a 'natural resource' for the development of human civilization; similar to the status of nature in human civilization, women represent "the other" in human society under patriarchal domination, forced to remain silent in the public arena and permanently under the yoke of male. They have been kept silent in the public and have remained under the yoke of male culture for a long time. This is also what ecofeminists consider as unfairness between women and men. Although Scarlett grows up in a social environment where women are oppressed by men, she still has the courage to fight for freedom and disregard the opinions of others. She expresses her dissatisfaction with widowhood and claims that her life is cut short at the age of sixteen. She also boldly accepts Rhett's invitation to dance at a fundraising ball for the hospital. At this point in her life, even though she has become a mother, she still keeps her part of the teenage caprice and does whatever she wants.

Both women and nature have gone through a process of reverence and decline, and both have suffered the ravages of imperial wars, colonial expansion and the exclusion of industrial civilization. This makes it possible for women to grow up with environmental influences that are profound and intimate. Families in the South suffered greatly during the war, including property damage, family divisions and human casualties. When the war reaches Atlanta, all the people fleeing in a hurry, she has to help Melanie to give birth to a child at such a difficult time. This is the first manifestation of her sense of responsibility. At this point, she is no longer the willful and spoiled young lady she once was. It is in this harsh war environment that she gradually grows into a brave and strong independent woman. Later Scarlett becomes the only person who could take care of the rest of the weak during their way to Tara. However, when she arrives home, she realizes that the family has been changed forever. She faces the shortage of food and the responsibility to carry a whole family. Her mother's death makes her more determined to be a strong and brave person, to take up the burden of rebuilding her home and taking care of her family. The brutality of the war has also made her realize that she can no longer be the same young girl she once was, but must be strong enough to face everything and know that she can no longer live a pampered

life. "She had never in her life been out in the sunshine without a hat or veils, never handled reins without gloves to protect the white skin of her dimpled hands...What a few short weeks it had been since she was safe and securer. But the small cloud which appeared in the northwest four months ago had blown up into a mighty storm and then into a screaming tornado, sweeping away her world, whirling her out of her sheltered life, and dropping her down in the midst of this still, haunted desolation" (Margaret, 2018: 549).

In patriarchal societies, women and nature have a similar status, both being oppressed and dominated. After the civil war, the burden of cleaning up the mess and rebuilding homes falls on women, and it is the great nature and hard-working women who provide food and other resource. The position of the head of the family has also shifted from men to women due to the war. But the patriarchal culture makes men deny the discouraging fact that they are inseparable from nature and women. The land nurtures everything in the world, and people depend on the food that grows from it, on the water that nature provides, and on the natural air that they breathe. At this moment, Scarlett finally realizes the importance of the land and her deep love and dependence on it. And she is not the spoiled girl anymore. She becomes the head of the family, and everyone depends on her. She also works in the fields herself, braving the wind and the sun. Later Ashley's return also highlights the ways in which the war has changed the South and its people. The plantation lifestyle that had been so central to the region's identity was no longer sustainable, as the destruction of crops and resources had left many families struggling to survive. This marks a shift in the novel, as Scarlett begins to take on a more active role in providing for her family and community, challenging traditional gender roles and expectations.

4.2.2. Saving the Homeland - Ethical Conflicts

From an eco-feminist perspective, Scarlett's character growth is closely linked to environmental and social issues. In *Gone with the Wind*, Scarlett's efforts to save her home reflect her growth and her rejection of traditional gender roles and expectations. As the Civil War progresses, Scarlett becomes increasingly determined to save her family's plantation, Tara, and provide for her family. By recognizing the importance of preserving and protecting the land, Scarlett challenges the dominant patriarchal values that place exploitation and domination above the well-being of the planet and its inhabitants. As she takes a more active role in providing for her family and community, she challenges the idea that women are limited to the domestic sphere and undervalued for their contribution to society. Later she even becomes a shrewd businesswoman, with her intelligence and resourcefulness to obtain the resources needed to keep Tara running and provide for her family.

The war has left behind a large number of burnt farmland and a series of living problems. Under such circumstances, both nature and women are greatly sabotaged and hurt. Women not only should deal with the food supply, but also had to worry about the safety problems. The burden of rebuilding the home falls on Scarlett. She grows from a pampered young lady into an indomitable warrior woman, and what she considers every day is how to supply her family. She believes in supporting herself and her family with her own hands, but this idea is not understood by her sisters at first. The Civil War causes the collapse and unraveling of civilization in the Old South, and the teachings of her mother Ellen could only be adaptable to a step-by-step, orderly world. Scarlett now has a new set of values and standards of right

and wrong, and she knows how to adapt to the changing circumstances rather than dwelling on the good old days. The war torn Tara Manor has made her realize that the land is what makes it worth fighting for, and for herself, there is nothing more important than supporting Tara Manor beyond that.

Ecofeminism is committed to the construction of a new moral value that sees the full potential of both male and female talents. To protect her family, Scarlett can make the most out of her abilities. When the northern soldier comes to Tara to loot, she shoots the man with agility and gets the needed supplies and money from him. As eco-feminism advocates, the status of men and women should be equal, and women who are soft on the outside and strong on the inside also have fighting power. Killing the robbers was an act of self-defense, and Scarlett's bravery and resourcefulness in disposing of the body alone after this was admirable

Ecofeminism emphasizes the close connection between women and nature. The ecofeminist understanding of nature reveals a new relationship between humans and nature, one that is vibrant and dynamic, where nature develops together with humans; the ecofeminist redefinition of nature makes it possible for women to act in concert with nature and others. The ecofeminist approach to environmental protection is the same approach to the full development of all human beings, and it calls not only for the overthrow of the logical structures that govern nature and women, but also for the overthrow of all the oppressive conceptual frameworks that are linked to it. In fact, Tara Manor means everything to Scarlett that even she sometimes doesn't realize. "There was nothing else she did have, nothing but this red land. Even in her emptiness, she knew it would have torn her heart to leave these dear red hills and long washed gullies and gaunt black pines. Her thoughts would have turned back to them hungrily until the day she died." (Margaret, 2018: 742). Scarlett, as the head of the family at this time, had a strong desire to protect the estate. However, as a young woman at the time, she did not have much choice and her first thought was to marry Rhett, a man with unexplained money and a bad reputation, to use his wealth to keep the estate, which is pathetic but is also a great act. Here is Scarlett's inner monologue at the time, "Oh, they're all fools! They'll never realize! They'll go right on thinking and living as they always have, and nothing will change them. They won't change. Maybe they can't change. I'm the only one who's change-and I wouldn't have changed if I could have helped it" (Margaret, 2018: 762). From this passage, we can surmise that Scarlett is the one that has the courage and power to change. It's also a sign of the feminist awakening within her that she understands that she has the power to get what she wants instead of waiting for a miracle to happen.

Scarlett's actions in *Gone with the Wind* involve a number of complex moral and ethical issues. Her abandonment of past traditions that demanded women, followed by her stealing her sister Suellen's husband Frank to preserve the estate, and later becoming a businesswoman, may all lead to controversy and different evaluations. Firstly, Scarlett's act of stealing Susan's husband, Frank, may be seen as improper and immoral. Her actions not only hurt her own sister, but also destroys her own marriage and reputation. Nonetheless, this act might be perceived as Scarlett's way of disregarding the expectations of women and actively seeking her own satisfaction and happiness. Secondly, her way of becoming a businesswoman may be seen as an act in which

she challenges traditional gender roles. She is no longer a woman who follows traditional norms, but a woman who is ambitious and capable of reaching her goals. Overall, her growth not only shows the influence of environment on women, but also shows her concern for society and environment, as well as her challenge and criticism of traditional gender roles. This also shows that women's understanding and participation in environmental and social issues is crucial, and they are even in a dominant position, and it also reflects that the interaction between human beings and nature will have a far-reaching impact on human beings.

5. Women and Nature under Patriarchy

Ecofeminism in *Gone with the Wind* can help us understand the connection between women and nature and how empowering women can protect the environment. One way to show this connection in fiction is to describe the traditional role of women as homemakers. Women are responsible for collecting resources from nature, such as food, and ensuring that their families have the necessities for survival. The environmental damage caused by the war and the ensuing socioeconomic changes have a direct impact on women's ability to fulfill these roles and thus on the well-being of their families, but they still take on the responsibility of providing for their families. And while people are taking food from nature, they are also protecting the natural environment. In addition, the natural world is portrayed as a source of solace and comfort for Scarlett in the novel. Scarlett finds peace and respite in nature, often hiding out in the outdoors to escape the stresses and challenges of everyday life. This shows how the natural world can provide a sense of belonging and security, especially in times of turmoil.

At that time, women and nature were in the same position, where they both subjected to men. They are both vulnerable and dependent on men. They were under the control of men and did not have the right to participate in important decisions, such as whether to wage war or not. While men viewed the war as glory and pride, to women and nature the war is a huge catastrophe. Secondly, women and nature both have the ability of fertility. The fertile land can produce all kinds of vegetables and fruits, and there are poultry which are dependent on them. Women also have the ability to give birth to children. Moreover, women and nature both go through similar hardship. When the war came, all of them would become victims that they all suffer tremendous sabotage. The land would be burn to ashes and lose fertility. And the poultry would be either killed or plundered. As for women, they have to run away from their home and lose their beloved ones, not to mention the difficulty in giving birth to children under such a difficult time.

The connection between women and nature as well as gendered power structures in *Gone with the Wind* contribute to a deeper understanding of ecofeminism. Ecofeminism aims to create a more sustainable society by valuing women's efforts and protecting the environment.

5.1. Women's Role before and during the Civil War

Under ecofeminist theory, the role of women during the Civil War is seen as an example of the ways in which women have historically been marginalized and exploited, both in the war and society. Women played a crucial role during the Civil War, both on the home front and on the battlefield, but their contributions have often been overlooked or minimized in mainstream narratives of the war. From an ecofeminist perspective, the experiences of women during the Civil War can be seen as part of a larger pattern

of exploitation and degradation of the natural world. The war itself was a result of a complex web of political, economic, and social factors, many of which were tied to the exploitation of natural resources and the expansion of capitalist systems of production. Women, who were often responsible for managing households and farms, were intimately connected to the land and the environment. The war reshaped the social structure and changed the status of women in productive life, and women were no longer the angels in the house. In such a society, women are seen as being in a subordinate role, and it is thought that they should undergo more suffering than men. People perceive women and men differently. Women are often expected to demonstrate their lack of knowledge in front of men in order to win their favor. Society expects women to adhere to a moral model of a virtuous wife and mother, which means efficiently managing the household, exercising female virtues, limiting public activities to the ceremonial social circle, and being conscious of her language and behavior; otherwise, she will be seen as unethical and condemned. Women are not given the opportunity to express their emotions without being judged or seen as vulgar. "Women know that a place is probably also a great place for women to live as long as men feel comfortable with it, do not resist it, do not hurt their faces, and keep their vanity" (Margaret, 2009:109). Here the author clearly writes about one of the rules of a patriarchal society, which also shows the unequal status of men and women, and the marginal position of women. In the book, women eating out is also seen as a form of unladylike behavior. A passage in the book speaks bluntly about the stereotypes of women in society at the time. "I am tired of everlastingly being unnatural and never doing anything I want to do. I am tired of acting like I don't eat more than a bird, and walking when I want to run and saying I feel faint after a waltz, when I could dance for two days and never get tired." (Margaret, 2018: 109). This passage vividly portrays the image of a lady in southern society at the time.

When the Civil War broke out, the young men went off to join the army and the women became the head of a family. The women in *Gone with the Wind* were responsible for running the household and plantations during wartime and had to cope with the challenges of wartime shortages and economic hardship. They were responsible for looking after their own families, and this often-required resourcefulness to creatively find ways to provide for their families. Besides, some of the female characters in *Gone with the Wind* provided medical care during the war, including Scarlett, who became a nurse after the fall of Atlanta. Women like her often worked in difficult and dangerous conditions, and their contributions helped to save lives and alleviate suffering. Under such circumstance, women actually gained more rights than before. They were able to make independent decisions and play a more important role in the family and society, but this did not prove that women's status in society had improved. At a charity sale to raise money for the treatment of soldiers in the hospital, the presiding doctor offered that if the gentlemen wanted to choose a particular lady to dance with, they had to put a price on her. The wives disapproved of what looked like an auction of black slaves, but they did not dare to show their disapproval, and the men as well as most of the young women did not see anything wrong from it. But this is actually a manifestation of the unequal status of men and women.

5.2. The Destruction of Nature by War

In ecofeminist theory, the suffering of nature in *Gone with the Wind* is seen as an example of the ways in which patriarchal systems of power are intertwined with the exploitation and

degradation of the natural world. Under male-dominated structures, nature and women are held in the same position, both seen as outsiders, both dependent and controlled by men. Therefore, nature also suffered greatly. At the beginning of the Civil War, most Southerners swore to win the war and even looked forward to it with infinite hope. In fact, it is a mapping of patriarchy in which male arrogance is so infinitely cultivated that they unconsciously neglect the protection of nature. The novel portrays the destruction of nature caused by the war, including the burning of Atlanta and the destruction of Tara. The characters in *Gone with the Wind* also struggle with food shortages and crop failures caused by the war. These impacts are closely tied to the suffering of nature, as the destruction of crops and resources leads to environmental degradation and further suffering for both humans and the natural world. The war also leads to disease outbreaks, which have a profound impact on both humans and the natural world. For example, Typhoid outbreaks in squatter settlements are a direct consequence of environmental degradation caused by war. Even though this could have been prevented, in a patriarchal system, men are the ones who make decisions, including whether to go to war, and nature is in a subordinate position and had to follow their orders. Unfortunately, when the war bursts out, all of the peace and beauty is ruined. All these natural things such as the earth, plants, animals are severely damaged. The following scene describes Scarlett on her way back to Tara during the war: "...Tara stretched before her, negroes gone, acres desolate, barns ruined, like a body bleeding under her eyes, like her own body slowly bleeding. This was the end of the road, quivering old age, sickness, hungry mouths, helpless hands plucking at her skirts. And at the end of this road, there was nothing" (Margaret, 2018: 278).

Therefore, nature is intrinsically valuable and interconnected with other living things. It is not just a resource available to humans, but a complex web of that sustains all life on earth.

6. Conclusion

This study illustrates Scarlett's growth in the Civil War, the oppression and exploitation of women and nature by patriarchal society, and the relationship between men and women in *Gone with the Wind* from an ecofeminist perspective. Through the experiences of its protagonist Scarlett, the novel *Gone with the Wind* presents the plight and challenges of women in the social and ecological environment of the South. From an eco-feminist perspective, Scarlett's upbringing reflects that the destruction of the natural environment by humans and the oppression and control of women are interrelated. Therefore, through Scarlett's growth, the novel calls for people to respect the natural environment and women's rights, and to pursue ecological harmony and social justice. In addition, the novel reveals the value of women's self-redemption and exploration of individuality, providing useful insights into the development of feminism and ecology.

In this novel, the author's portrayal of Tara Manor contrasts the pre-war and post-war periods, along with the transformation of Scarlett's attitude toward Tara Manor and her own character. Ecofeminism actively identifies with the patriarchally marginalized other, including not only women, people of color, and other human beings, but also nature, and unites them in a common examination that promotes care and equality. In this work, we can see the intimacy and inseparability of women and nature, and that women suffer while nature is being destroyed. Women change and develop

with the changes in nature. The environment shapes women and gives them spiritual strength.

The following three elements are revealed through the novel's exploration of ecofeminism. Firstly, both nature and women are dominated and exploited; ecofeminism argues that both nature and women are dominated and exploited by the patriarchal system that dominates society. This domination and exploitation lead to environmental degradation and the oppression of women. Ecofeminism therefore argues for the need to re-establish a harmonious relationship between humans and nature, and to fight for women's rights and equality. The second is that there are many similarities between nature and women. For example, both women and nature are seen as 'subjugated' and 'consumed', and both are given a nurturing and caring role. Recognizing these similarities can therefore help us to take appropriate action to protect nature and respect female. Finally, the role of women in environmental protection is fundamental. Women are indispensable for a more peaceful relationship between human beings and nature.

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