



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Eco-Feminism In Margaret Atwood's Dystopian Narratives: A Comparative Analysis Of *Oryx And Crake* And *The Year Of The Flood*

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Abstract

This paper investigates eco-feminist themes in Margaret Atwood's dystopian novels *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*. It explores the intersection of gender oppression and environmental degradation, revealing how Atwood critiques patriarchal and anthropocentric systems. Through comparative analysis, the study highlights narrative strategies and character constructions that foreground women's agency and ecological ethics. The findings underscore the relevance of eco-feminist perspectives in understanding contemporary crises and advocating for sustainable futures.

Keywords

Eco-feminism, Margaret Atwood, dystopia, gender oppression, environmental ethics, *Oryx and Crake*, *The Year of the Flood*, narrative analysis, patriarchal structures, ecological justice

Introduction

Eco-feminism offers a critical lens to examine the interconnected exploitation of women and nature under patriarchal systems. Margaret Atwood's dystopian fiction provides fertile ground for such analysis, portraying societies fractured by ecological collapse and gendered violence. This study focuses on *Oryx and Crake* (2003) and *The Year of the Flood* (2009), analysing how Atwood integrates eco-feminist concerns into her narrative architecture and character development.

Methodology

The research adopts a qualitative, comparative literary analysis rooted in eco-feminist theory. Primary texts are examined alongside theoretical contributions from Vandana Shiva, Carolyn Merchant, and Greta Gaard. The study emphasizes thematic exploration, character agency, and narrative structure to uncover eco-feminist dimensions within Atwood's dystopian worlds.

Analysis and Discussion

Eco-Feminist Themes in *Oryx and Crake*

Atwood's *Oryx and Crake* present a dystopia shaped by genetic manipulation, corporate dominance, and ecological ruin. The character of Oryx embodies systemic gender exploitation, her commodified existence

reflecting patriarchal control over female bodies. The narrative critiques male-centric scientific ambition, exposing its disregard for ecological balance and ethical responsibility.

Eco-Feminist Themes in *The Year of the Flood*

In contrast, *The Year of the Flood* centers on the eco-spiritual community of God's Gardeners. Female protagonists Toby and Ren exemplify resilience, ecological knowledge, and ethical living. Their roles challenge patriarchal violence and promote ecological restoration, aligning with eco-feminist ideals of interconnected justice.

Comparative Insights

Both novels foreground women as moral and ecological agents. While *Oryx and Crake* emphasize technological dystopia, *The Year of the Flood* offers a vision of community-based resistance and healing. Atwood's use of fragmented timelines and multiple perspectives reinforces the complexity of eco-feminist critique, linking environmental degradation with gendered oppression.

Conclusion

Margaret Atwood's dystopian narratives serve as compelling texts for eco-feminist analysis. Through *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*, she critiques patriarchal excess and ecological exploitation, advocating for ethical consciousness and female agency. The study affirms the significance of eco-feminism in literary discourse and its potential to inform responses to real-world crises.

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