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An Ecofeminist Reading of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*

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ABSTRACT

Although ecofeminism emerged in the 1970s as a separate field of study, ecofeminist subjects and themes are not limited to the modern age but were also handled by Shakespeare centuries ago. Women, underclass people, working class, people of colour, animals, and nature have been oppressed and exploited in hierarchically structured patriarchal societies throughout history. Especially women have been closely associated with nature because of their physiology, and psychology and this close identification has been deeply coded in both their socio-culturally and ideologically assigned roles and patriarchal languages. Thus, this bond between nature and women has been established both ontologically and epistemologically. Therefore, "no attempt to liberate women (or any other oppressed group) will be successful without an equal attempt to liberate nature" (Gaard, 1993, p. 1) since all forms of oppression are essentially related. This paper aims to study Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* from an ecofeminist perspective by particularly focusing on the mutual domination of women and nature in a highly patriarchal and hierarchical society. Nature and women are both subjugated and victimized by androcentric and dualistically thinking men who fail to recognize the interconnectedness and interdependence between men and women, men and nature, and culture and nature.

Key Words: Ecofeminism, Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, Nature and Women

1. Introduction

Shakespeare has certainly been the most intensively and frequently studied writer all over the world. Shakespeare and his works have been examined and explored from many different perspectives including feminist, Marxist and post/colonial studies because of the richness of his works. Barker and Hill also point out to this fact: "just how plural the encounter with Shakespeare can be" (89). However, Shakespeare has not yet been fully explored from ecocritical and ecofeminist perspectives. Shakespeare is a many-sided writer who, with his wit and innate ability, was able to go beyond the understanding of his time not only with his attitude towards nature but also with his representations and portrayal of women. What singles out Shakespeare is his innovative and experimental spirit. Ecocritical studies have turned their attention to non-environmental writers like Shakespeare who have not been writing in an age of environmental crises. Since the literary studies are greening and ecocritical studies aim to be more inclusive and interdisciplinary, an ecocritical reading of Shakespeare will be promising in the sense that it will provide new insights into unexplored aspects of Shakespeare and it will contribute to ecocritical studies which try to expand their scope by offering a new perspective.

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This paper aims to focus on the cultural construction of nature and the early environmental concerns such as deforestation, the fertility of the soil, control over the use of the public land, and the forest and man's reshaping of nature as reflected by Shakespeare who took a deep interest in questioning man's place in nature by taking into consideration the interplay between gender, culture and landscape. His "essential sources" are the "life of the English countryside, its fields and gardens, flora and fauna, sports and pastimes" and "his main imagery derives directly from intimate observations of birds and beasts, seasons and crops, tending and hunting, killing and eating" (Fraser 2,4). Shakespeare deals with nature in terms of earth, soil, land, and landscape and with his creative consciousness, he reflects the awareness that nature is an ideological, political and cultural space where there exists a struggle for power. Shakespeare's concern with nature, as can be observed in his references to the forest, soil and earth, reveals proto-ecological perceptions. Shakespeare presents a depiction of an ambivalent and complex relation between human and nature which is marked by gender politics and socio-cultural dynamics that were at work in his time. Thus, this paper intends to explore Shakespeare's ecological consciousness and offer an ecofeminist reading of Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* in order to shed light on the close relation between both the mutual oppression and liberation of nature and women with particular attention to how the relation between nature and women both in the socio-cultural and natural setting has been either encouraged or interrupted and prevented according to the demands and desires of the patriarchal society.

2. Ecocriticism

Race, class, and gender are the main categories that have been intensely examined and studied in literature since the 1960s. Despite the obvious indications and consequences of ecological disasters, environmental issues were ignored by the academia until recently (Love, 1996, p. 226). Glotfelty (1996), a leading figure in ecocriticism, points out to the lack of interest in environmental issues in literature:

If your knowledge of the outside world were limited to what you could infer from the major publications of the literary profession, you would quickly discern that race, class, and gender were the hot topics of the late twentieth century, but you would never suspect that the earth's life support systems were under stress. (xvi)

It is a certain fact that we live in the age of global crises mostly as a result of human actions that have damaged the basic life support system of the planet. Being aware of the upcoming problems, some mindful people began to react and stand against the nuclear weapons, wars, excessive consumption of natural resources, pollution, and overpopulation to protect the only "nest" of all living creatures (White, 1996, p. 5). However, their voice could not be heard loud enough to attract the attention of the public and set a political agenda until the mid-eighties due to the lack of cooperation and unity among these people. Then, they "began to undertake collaborative projects", which planted the seeds of environmental literary studies (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xvii). With the foundation of *Association for the Study of Literature and Environment* (ASLE) in 1992, (Garrard, 2004, p. 4) and the publication of *Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment* (ISLE) in 1993, environmental studies could reach more people by raising awareness (Glotfelty, 1996, p. vxiii). With the University of Nevada, Reno, environmental studies found a place in academy for the first time in 1990 and after the late 1990s, the ecological literary studies emerged as a recognizable critical school (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xviii). There appeared different ideas as to how these studies would be labelled and categorized, and because of its

easily converted forms such as ecocritical and ecocritics, “ecocriticism” has been preferred for the ecological studies in literature (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xx). Moreover, due to *eco*’s suggestion of “interdependent communities, integrated systems and strong connections among constituent parts” when compared to *enviro*- which implies anthropocentric and dualistic ideas since it denotes that man is at the centre and surrounded by the environment, the term ecocriticism is considered to be the best alternative for “environmentally conscious criticism” (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xx).

The word ecocriticism is derived from the Greek words ‘oikos’ and ‘kritis’ which refer to a ‘house judge’. While ‘oikos’ stands for nature, ‘widest home’, ‘kritis’ stands for a judge who wishes and tries to protect and keep the ‘widest home’ in a healthy state and good order (Howarth, 1996, p. 69). As a term, ecocriticism was coined by William Rueckert in his article “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism” in 1978. What Rueckert meant by ecocriticism was the application “of ecological concepts to the reading, teaching, and writing about literature” by relying on the power of the interconnection between ecology and literature to prevent “the human community from destroying the natural community and with it the human community” (Rueckert, 1996, p. 107). However, Glotfelty’s definition of ecocriticism, that is, “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment” is more favoured. Ecocriticism has offered an earth-based approach to the literary studies (Glotfelty, 1996, p. xviii).

Ecocritics believe that literature is a powerful and effective means to encourage people to tackle environmental problems and natural degradation since “human beings are the earth’s only literary creatures” (qtd. in Love, 1996, p. 228). Moreover, statistical data, mathematical numbers, scientific information do not appeal to people. Literary works dealing with ecology and ecological problems speak louder than scientific information, as can be seen in Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* whose publication in 1962 played an important role in the passing of Wilderness Act in the USA in 1964 (Opperman, 2006, p. 5). What Carson achieved in this book is the fruitful merging between scientific discourse and literary discourse in her scientific book which is written in the mode of a fairy tale by demonstrating literature and literary works have great potential to change “ego-consciousness” to “eco-consciousness” (Love, 1996, p. 232).

Driven by ego-consciousness and anthropocentrism, man has always put himself in the centre, which has brought about the destruction of the world. The philosophical ideas proposed by prominent philosophers including Bacon, Descartes, and Kant promoted the mechanistic worldview, and scientific and anthropocentric outlook. In addition, colonialism and capitalism that accelerated after the Scientific Revolution, industrialization that prioritized man’s profits and interests and lastly religion that provided the necessary justification to establish man as the most superior and privileged being caused man to turn a blind eye to nature and natural degradation.

Descartes’ binary oppositions presented mind and body in a dualistic way, affirming the other dualistic concepts and categories including culture/nature, man/woman, reason/emotion, self/other, human/animal, master/slave (Plumwood, 2003, p. 43). The second item in these dualistic pairs “is not only subordinate, but in service to the first” (Adams, 1993, p. 2). As Plumwood states, dualism “is the process by which contrasting concepts (for example, masculine and feminine gender identities) are formed by domination and subordination and constructed as oppositional and exclusive” (Plumwood, 2003, p. 31), and in this process as women serve men, nature serves culture, which brings the downfall of both women and nature. Due to the dualistic worldview, “man and nature are two things, and man

is master" (White, 1996, p. 8). However, it is not possible to differentiate culture from nature since "in fact, they mingle, like water and soil in a flowing stream" (Howarth, 1996, p. 69). Ecocriticism, believing in the intrinsic value of everything in nature, rejects nature-culture, human-nonhuman dualisms.

Like Descartes, Francis Bacon, regarded as "the father of modern science", had an impact on the development of anthropocentric ideas in the Western world (Merchant, 1995: 80) by encouraging man to use "science as a method for revealing nature's secrets" (Merchant, 1995, p. 68) since scientific knowledge, to Bacon, "means technological power over nature" (White, 1996, p. 4). With scientific and technological improvements, man's dependence on nature has lessened and nature, once a living entity, has now turned into a non-living and mechanistic 'thing'.

Thanks to the developments in science and technology, people's working places changed from the agricultural land to big factories and there emerged a need for raw materials and new markets to sell the products, which gave way to the rise of colonization and capitalism. Colonization and capitalism motivated by the idea of perpetual growth worked together in the exploitation of nature and people. Man's greed was backed up by the social structure, science, technology, cultural discourse, and by religion which is believed to have given man the right to exploit the natural world for his own interests and gain.

To Lynn White, Jr. (1996) Christianity is the "most anthropocentric religion the world has seen". "The victory of Christianity over paganism" was a revolution "in the history of our culture" (p. 9) since Adam and Eve were commanded to "be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it" and to dominate "over the fish of sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living that moveth upon the earth" (qtd. in Merchant, 2004, p. 13). For White, humanity needs a new understanding of religion which endorses equality among all creatures regardless of their species since "the roots of our trouble are so largely religious" and thus, "the remedy must be essentially religious" (White, 1996, p. 14).

However, ecocriticism is criticized by some feminists who later came up with the term ecofeminism since ecocriticism holds all people equally responsible for the deterioration of nature. However, ecofeminism denounces particularly the male-induced system whose patriarchal and hierarchical structures and institutions have led to the destruction of the natural world and the subjugation of both women and nature. Since the problems are all intrinsically related to each other, environmental problems cannot be handled by ignoring the other problems including the problems of women, the poor, people of colour, and the animals. Therefore, in order to have a healthy planet, one should oppose all "-isms of domination" because "the domination of sex, gender, race, and class and the domination of nature are mutually reinforcing" (Smith, 1997, p. 21).

3. Ecofeminism

Being at the crossroad of ecocriticism and feminism, ecofeminism is "a new term for an ancient wisdom" (Mies and Shiva, 1993, p. 13). As a term, it was firstly used by French writer Françoise d'Eaubonne in her book, *Le Féminisme ou la Mort* in 1974 to call women to "lead an ecological revolution to save the planet" (Merchant, 1995, p. 5). As a movement, ecofeminism evolved out of social movements such as feminism, peace, and ecology movements in the late 1970s and early 1980s

(Mies and Shiva, 1993, p. 13). Specifically focusing on the relationship between the domination of women and the exploitation of nature as a result of androcentric and dualistic mindsets of patriarchal culture, ecofeminists put forward three different and challenging ideas about the women-nature connection. The first group of ecofeminists including Janis Birkeland, d'Eaubonne, and ex-ecofeminist Janet Biehl reject an inherent connection between women and nature because of the fact that such an essentialist affirmation of this connection justifies and reinforces the oppression of women and exploitation of nature. They consider androcentric worldviews to be the main cause of the subjugation of women and the exploitation of nature.

The second group of ecofeminists, mostly including the cultural ecofeminists such as Starhawk, Charlene Spretnak, and Carol P. Christ, certainly celebrates the connection between women and nature. Sherry Ortner suggests three reasons for the inherent connection between women and nature. Firstly, women's physiology, namely, their ability to give birth brings them closer to nature which is also able to produce new crops, mines, etc. Secondly, because of their motherly duties, women are socially and culturally expected to be nurturing and protective by fulfilling duties such as household chores, care-taking, and preparing food. In that way, they are alienated from the cultural world and limited to the domestic and natural world. Thirdly, their psychology, and their culturally and socially shaped psychic structure conditions women to feel closer to the natural world. Women are taught to function merely as women, daughters, and mothers and they are taught to be content with those roles. However, for cultural ecofeminists, the values that are responsible for the close connection between women and nature are not the values to be rejected but they should be celebrated by women to have a healthy planet and healthy women as well as to sustain life on Earth.

The third group of ecofeminists, including Merchant, Plumwood, Mellor, and King, believe that the connection between nature and women is not biologically but "historically and socially constructed", and they follow a middle way between the ones who affirm the woman-nature connection and the ones who defy this connection (qtd. in Rose, 1993, p. 150). Mayer (1994) states that there are socio-historical associations between women and nature which are embedded in our conceptual frameworks. In other words, nature and women are historically, conceptually, socially, theoretically, symbolically, epistemologically, and experientially related (pp. 3, 20). In Shakespeare's plays, women and nature are also historically and conceptually connected. The roots of their suppression and oppression have been justified by the grand narratives like religion, science, and philosophy. Women, nature, and animals are compared to each other through a sexist, naturist or speciesist language in Shakespeare's plays as well.

4. William Shakespeare and His Representation of Women and Nature

Both in his comedies and tragedies, Shakespeare created various and unforgettable characters. In each play, we are introduced to a great variety of heroines, some of whom are very docile like Ophelia, some are ambitious like Lady Macbeth, and others are brave like Rosalind. Therefore, Shakespeare does not portray women in stereotypical representations as passive, submissive, and silent heroines. His heroines do not always fulfil the expectations of the society they live in. They do not hesitate to fight for their liberation and they courageously and determinedly resist against their victimization and subordination. In line with the ideas of cultural ecofeminism, his powerful heroines celebrate the women-nature connection and flee to nature to take shelter from the strictures of the society in disguise. In nature, "the inhibitions of public life are stripped away" (Kuiper, 2013, p. x), and they live

freely. As Lynch (2003) states, Shakespeare's powerful, witty, and eloquent heroines reflect "newly emerging cultural perceptions of women and feminine power during the long reign of the female monarch" (14). However, no matter how powerful they are, they eventually surrender to patriarchy at the end.

Shakespeare's attitude towards nature is ambivalent. Nature emerges as a character that affects and is affected by human characters in Shakespeare's plays and it plays an important role in the plot maybe because the land was significant for people in Stratford. Waage states that "Stratford's life was the land, not inert but vital, like a man's body. Or the body was like the land" (qtd. in Waage, 2005, p. 142). Waage (2005) also claims that "the influences of his family's background, unremitting toil on the land [...] permeate all Shakespeare's writing and thinking", and he adds that "his 'essential sources' are the 'life of the English countryside, its fields and gardens, flora and fauna, sports and pastimes', such that his main imagery derives directly from intimate observations of birds and beasts, seasons and crops, tending and hunting, killing and eating" (p.142). Like his heroines who can be either powerful or docile, or benign or evil, nature in Shakespeare's works can be either benevolent, and protective or hostile, and evil.

Several critics paid attention to how Shakespeare represented nature in his works. Raymond William, for instance, emphasized the three meanings and functions of nature that come to the fore in Shakespeare's plays: "(1) the essential quality of something; (2) the inherent force that directs the world; (3) the material world itself" (qtd.in Egan, 2006, p.6) while in "The Two Lear's: Shakespeare's Humanist Vision of Nature", Chung-Hsuan Tung refers to 6 different uses of nature:

- (1) the power or force which rules the universe and creates all things in it; (2) natural phenomena, like thunder, eclipses and rain; (3) the physical world or universe without spiritual or moral significance; (4) the physical strength, body or life of a person; (5) the inherent disposition or character of an individual; (6) and the essential qualities of a human being. (p.6)

On the other hand, Geoffrey Bush, In *Shakespeare and the Natural Condition*, also examines how nature is used in Shakespeare's plays and he comes to the conclusion that Shakespeare's concept of nature cannot be defined (Ribner, 1957, p. 288). In "An Ecofeminist Reading on Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* and *As You Like It*", Karahan (2017) argues that nature is used "as a reflection of the social order, as the reflection of nature and the inner world of the human beings through the comparison between the natural world and human nature, and as a physical environment on which human beings are dependent to live and which is benevolent like his good characters or malevolent like his evil characters, especially like his female characters" (pp.46-47).

While Simon Estok claims that Shakespeare has not been fully explored from an ecocritical perspective, Greg Garrard states that applying ecocriticism to Shakespeare is difficult since "most of [Shakespeare's] plays do not deal with the natural world or animals in any significant way" (qtd. in Estok, 2008, p.80). To Estok, the ecocritical analyses of Shakespeare should not be just thematic but it should also trigger people to change their way of looking at animals, trees, and plants, namely, at nature in general. For instance, *Titus Andronicus*, with 14 deaths and cannibalism in it, makes people "organize their thinking about eating" (Estok, p.83). It "challenges meat-based dietary philosophy and, through such a challenge, encourages environmental activism" (Estok, p.83).

As discussed in *Ecocritical Shakespeare*, in the nature writings of the 19th and 20th centuries, nature was reflected as a pastoral retreat and a space of personal meditation with an anthropocentric and class-privileged perspective. However, ecocriticism requires critics to handle the concept of nature from different perspectives. For instance, ecocritical studies on Shakespeare's works pay attention to anthropocentrism, environmental degradation, ecological and scientific literacy, living systems, and intrinsic value of nature and animals (Brayton and Bruckner, 2011, p.3). Rather than dealing with the works consciously written about nature like "prose and poems about walks in remote and beautiful places by English Romantics such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge and the American Transcendentalists" like R.W. Emerson and H.D. Thoreau (Egan, 2006, p.34), ecocritics have already turned their attention to other canonical works whose main focus is not placed noticeably on nature. Gabriel Egan (2006), in *Green Shakespeare*, also maintains that ecocriticism should not be confined to nature writing: "the history of politicized criticism teaches us to move from the obvious cases to the not so obvious" (p.34).

5. An Ecofeminist Analysis of *The Winter's Tale*

Ecofeminism believes that the present crisis of our world today is not only social, political, economic, and technological but also spiritual. Ecofeminism insists that we are socially, economically, physically, and spiritually dependent on nature and connected "with all beings in the web of life" (Christ, 1990, p.58). In this web, whether human or non-human, everything has its own intrinsic value and each species is mutually dependent on each other in nature. *The Winter's Tale* shares the same emphasis and the characters, regardless of their genders, social classes, and ages, are all presented as dependent on nature for their survival.

The characters up to the Act III Scene III, seem to be disconnected from nature since most of the action in this part takes place inside Leontes' court. However, the survival of the most of the characters depends on the natural world in the second part which begins with a shift from the court to the coast in Bohemia where Perdita is kept alive. When Antigonus comes to the coast of Sicilia, he leaves Hermione's baby in the hands of nature as Leontes orders:

I swear to do this, though a present death
Had been more merciful. --Come on, poor babe,
Some powerful spirit instruct the kites and ravens
To be thy nurses. Wolves and bears, they say,
Casting their savageness aside, have done
Like offices of pity. (II, iii, 225-30)

Hermione, after being accused of adultery, hides in Paulina's house to escape from death with the hope of seeing her lost daughter Perdita who has been left in the hands of nature to shape her destiny:

To some remote and desert place quite out
Of our dominions, and that there thou leave it,
Without more mercy, to its own protection
And favour of the climate. As by strange fortune
It came to us, I do in justice charge thee,
On thy soul's peril and thy body's torture,
That thou commend it strangely to some place
Where chance may nurse or end it. Take it up. (II, iii, 217-24)

While cultural men leave Perdita to death, “great creating nature” (p.104) meets the baby’s need, protects and “[d]oes give a life” (p.2) to her like a mother. Shakespeare makes use of this close association between nature and woman by making nature function as a substitute mother.

Not only the shepherd or shepherdesses but all the other characters are in need of nature since it provides money, food, a shelter, freedom, and spiritual relief. The shepherds have flocks which are milked, sheared and sold. The sheep-shearing in act IV scene IV is not just a feast, but also it is economic business. The wool sheared in that feast is sold, which is a way of making money for the shepherds of the forest:

Shepherd’s son:
every ’leven wether tods; every tod
yields pound and odd shilling; fifteen hundred
shorn. What comes the wool to? (IV, iii, pp.32-34)

However, this economic business increases the workload for women. Perdita, known as the Old Shepherd’s daughter, is in charge of the sheep shearing feast despite her unwillingness, and she should be acting as a “pantler, butler, cook, /Both dame and servant” in her whole life (pp.65-66). Like her mother, she is brought up to be a wife and mother in her adult life because women in general are not believed to be rational enough to take on the roles that are socially and culturally assigned to men. For this reason, they should be kept in the domestic sphere under the control of men to fulfil their feminine duties to help men to achieve success with unquestioning submission and subordination.

At the court the pastoral setting is initially associated with innocence and goodness as well. The King, Leontes and Polixenes spent their childhood in an Eden-like setting where they did not encounter any evil or sin. When they grew up and left the pastoral setting to exist in the cultural world, established as the realm of men, they lost their innocence and friendship. Jealousy replaces innocence in Leontes and he becomes preoccupied with the idea of taking revenge. When compared to blissful days of their childhood in which they “were as twinned lambs that did frisk i’ th’ sun, /And bleat the one at th’ other”, they are in a dire situation now (pp.85-86). Leontes suffers from the suspicion of treachery and infidelity, Polixenes has to endure the loss of a friend, and Hermione has to put up not only with the loss of her husband, son and daughter but also with her tarnished reputation and chastity.

When compared to the wickedness at court, the natural setting provides regeneration, renewal and purification for people. Estok points out that “[c]ertainly space and its conceptualization in this play are very significant, not only for the choppy plot but, more important, because they determine the structure of the lived experiences of the people in those spaces” (pp.185-186). The court witnesses treachery, trial, punishment, madness, and death which are all brought to the pastoral setting of Bohemia by Antigonus, a courtly man. However, nature eliminates the wickedness of the court and provides shelter for Perdita. Nature gives the newly-born baby to the old Shepherd as the source of happiness while his son is exposed to only violence and death in the court:

Heavy matters, heavy matters. But look
thee here, boy. Now bless thyself. Thou met’st with
things dying, I with things newborn. (pp.118-120)

Shakespeare clearly shows the loss of the innate connection with nature as a result of the fostering of the belief of man’s superiority in his time in his plays. Polixenes is the paragon of man’s sense of supremacy and importance over all other creatures.

In *Losing Touch with Nature*, Mary Thomas Crane (2014) also gives a detailed picture of the 16th century England's "loss of an intuitive connection with nature" (p.5). Discoveries and new technologies threatened the accepted view of "stable and intelligible universe whose surface appearance provided a reliable guide to its essential nature" (p.37). All these discoveries along with the radical new ideas such as the heliocentric universe, the supernova of 1572, and the atomic theories changed the attitude towards nature which was perceived as something that had secrets waiting to be revealed with the help of advanced mathematics, astrology, alchemy, etc. by ignoring the intuitive Aristotelian approach. Merchant (1995) claims that the Aristotelian conceptualization of nature was based on the organic view of nature "as a living, growing, self-actualizing being" (p.82), which led to the intuitive perception of nature through perceptual experiences and senses. This "experience [...] involving a more direct connection with observation of the world than did empiricism" (Crane, 2014, p.6) was rejected, and empirical understanding and study of nature gained importance, allowing "for something closer to the "experiment in the modern sense because nature had to be forced to yield up its secret" (p.21). This newly adopted approach towards nature enlarged man's knowledge about nature, and this knowledge ensured more power to man, enabling him to master, manage, control it by putting it in the service of humanity. Thus, "new science destroyed a direct, intuitive connection with nature" (Crane, 2014, p.5).

The Scientific Revolution and technological improvement encouraged man to deny the mutual dependency and interconnectedness between nature and man and establish ostensible mastery and domination over the creation. However, this did not liberate men who now developed reliance on the power granted with science and technology. As Bacon stated, the fallen Earth can be reclaimed with science just as the fallen faith can be reclaimed with religion (Merchant, 1995, p.31). In the play, *Polixenes*, as a typical Renaissance man, does not need nature for new flowers since he can "marry/ A gentler scion to the wildest stock, /And make conceive a bark of baser kind /By bud of nobler race" (pp.109-12). He, as the quintessence of the mechanistic view of nature which "assumes that nature can be divided into parts and the parts can be rearranged to create other species of being" (Merchant, 1990, p. 290), manages to reshape, reorganize and recreate nature as he wishes:

Polixenes:
 Yet nature is made better by no mean
 But nature makes that mean: so, over that art
 Which you say adds to nature, is an art
 That nature makes ...
 ... this is an art
 Which does mend nature, change it rather, but
 The art itself is nature. (IV, iv, pp. 106-109, 112-14)

Throughout Shakespeare's plays, characters treat the world around them as if it is alive; however, this view comes into conflict with the newly emerging mechanical view. This ambivalent attitude and conflicting feelings towards nature can be observed in the 15th and 16th centuries. As Collingwood (2006) points out "[t]he naturalistic philosophies of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries attributed to nature reason and sense, love and hate, pleasure and pain, and found in these faculties and passions the causes of natural process" (p.22). With the Old Shepherd, who follows his natural deeds, believes in the power of nature, and thus, represents the interrelatedness with nature, Shakespeare reacts against man's loss of the intuitive bond with nature. Mary Thomas Crane (2014) states that most of the major 16th century literary works by Marlowe, Spenser, and Shakespeare offered a critique of man's disconnection from nature and of the empirical, mechanistic and instrumentalist approach to nature (p.9).

For Shakespeare, nature is alive, active, and plays a crucial role in human's lives. Ecofeminism also views nature as active, dynamic, and independent. With storms, winds, and earthquakes, nature exerts power over and threatens men, which increases man's ambition to dominate and control nature. However, man's scientific and technological power is not always enough to subdue nature. When Antigonus and the mariner arrive at the coast of Bohemia from the court of Sicilia, "the skies look grimly/And threaten present blusters" (pp.4-5). Mariner claims that the "heavens.... are angry (p.6) with them for the fact that they take part in Leontes' crime "[a]nd frown upon's" (p.7). The angry heavens are foreshadowing Antigonus' tragic end. He is devoured by the bear later. In spite of the mariner's warnings about "the creatures/ Of prey" (pp.13-14), Antigonus put the baby "upon the earth/ Of its right father". He accuses Hermione of adultery and falsely declaring Polixenes as the father of the baby (pp.49-50). When he puts the baby on the earth, he realizes that

The day frowns more and more. Thou'rt like to have
A lullaby too rough. I never saw
The heavens so dim by day.
A savage clamour!
Well may I get aboard! This is the chase.
I am gone for ever. (III, iii, pp. 59-64)

The chaos in nature indeed reflects the chaos in Antigonus' inner world. Like the weather in the outside world, he feels disordered, restless and uneasy. Antigonus, despite his unwillingness, acts as the helper of Leontes in his cruel deed in spite of the oracle which elucidates Hermione's and the baby's innocence. Nature seeks to take revenge for the innocent who are victimized in the play; therefore, Antigonus is devoured by a bear and the ship is wrecked to punish Leontes:

But to make an
end of the ship: to see how the sea flap-dragoned it.
But, first, how the poor souls roared, and the sea
mocked them, and how the poor gentleman roared
and the bear mocked him, both roaring louder than
the sea or weather. (III,iii, pp. 102-107)

Shakespeare employs the shipwreck as a device to show men's powerlessness and helplessness in the face of nature's power. Nature cannot talk with words, but with signs or natural phenomena, it gives its messages. So, the shipwreck and the bear function as the warnings and punishments for the bad deeds of man. The bear attacks only Antigonus, but not the baby, since he is as guilty as Leontes since he fails to protect Hermione and her baby Perdita. Due to Leontes' deafness to all the warnings of nature and the oracle, nature punishes him with the deaths of his son Mamillus, Antigonus, and the mariner, which proves the fact that nature is active and more powerful than men, and if its order and peace are disturbed, it can show its hostile and evil side. Florizel is another character who is aware of the power of nature; however, he, unlike Antigonus and the mariner, is not punished by nature. He openly acknowledges and yields to the power of nature when Polixenes intervenes in his love relation with Perdita. He vows to remain loyal to Perdita, if he fails, as a punishment nature will destroy him along with the life on the Earth:

It cannot fail but by
The violation of my faith; and then
Let nature crush the sides o' th' earth together
And mar the seeds within. Lift up thy looks. (IV, iv, pp. 565-68)

Shakespeare challenges the discourse of his time that fosters the idea that man is superior to nature when he displays nature's power over humanity. As Carolyn Merchant points out in her *Earthcare*, rather than seeing nature as more powerful than human beings with her storms, winds, earthquakes or seeing human as more powerful and dominant over nature with the help of science and technology, it is wiser to develop and promote a partnership relationship between nature and human which can foreground the interconnection and interdependency between them since both of them can exert power over each other. Man has acquired enough scientific and technological knowledge to establish his mastery over nature while nature is powerful enough to destroy human lives. By bringing Sicilia (Leontes) and Bohemia (Polixenes), the court and country together at the end through the marriage of Perdita and Florizel, Shakespeare shows that the natural and cultural worlds are interwoven, and he does not use the pastoral setting as a sharp contrast to the courtly life. He also clearly shows that for the restoration of the characters and their lives, the pastoral setting is not the only way. Actually, the pastoral setting does not mean innocence and goodness for all the characters. For instance, Autolycus who belongs to the countryside in *The Winter's Tale* is famous for his lies, tricks, and charlatany. Just as the natural world does not make a person good automatically, the court or city life does not necessarily make one evil. Therefore, not all the characters in *The Winter's Tale* have to be a part of the natural world for purification. As in the case of Leontes, we cannot say that the city life is overall corrupted or destructive since we have good characters such as Paulina under whose guidance Leontes successfully undergoes the process of purgation and sees his wrongdoings first to Camillo and Polixenes and then to all his household:

O my brother,
 Good gentleman, the wrongs I have done thee stir
 Afresh within me, and these thy offices,
 So rarely kind, are as interpreters
 Of my behind-hand slackness
 ...
 You have a holy father,
 A graceful gentleman, against whose person,
 So sacred as it is, I have done sin:
 For which the heavens, taking angry note,
 Have left me issueless. And your father's blest,
 As he from heaven merits it, with you
 Worthy his goodness. What might I have been,
 Might I a son and daughter now have looked on,
 Such goodly things as you? (V, i, pp. 183-7;210-218)

He is regenerated with the help of Paulina, and he is not the same Leontes who had evil notions about the people around him earlier. After his repentance, Leontes has spent his 16 years by mourning after his wife, son, and daughter. After he is believed to have been completely purified, he is allowed to meet his daughter, his son-in-law, his friends Polixenes and Camillo, and finally his wife, Hermione.

6. The Place of Women and Men in Culture

Due to the androcentric worldview which puts man at the centre of the world as the master and thus creates dualistic and hierarchical structures in the society, both women and nature are oppressed and exploited by man. Therefore, ecofeminism calls for a struggle against patriarchy and hierarchy to end the dual oppression of nature and women. The patriarchal discourse reinforced the inherent connection between nature and women by highlighting rhetorical and physical similarities or cultural and natural realities. This brings about their mutual oppression and subordination since they are both

regarded as passive and open to exploitation by man. There is no agreement as to whether this connection between women and nature should be celebrated or rejected among ecofeminists. However, the main intention of all the ecofeminists is to fight against the reasons that lead to the domination of women and exploitation of nature in patriarchy and to end all types of oppression by freeing women and nature together.

In *The Winter's Tale*, patriarchy also devalues women by closely identifying them with nature mostly because of women's biology as promoted by male-centred religion, science, and culture in which man is prioritized and women, and nature are otherized and put in a lower scale in the hierarchical order. *The Winter's Tale* takes place in a highly patriarchal and hierarchical society characterized by gender and class inequalities and restrictions that women suffer from. Women are perceived merely as a body, and matter and thus reduced to their sexuality and reproductive function: "Women as beings whose primary functions are either to bear and raise children or to satisfy male sexual desires" (Warren, 1987, p.14). Women are also thought to be the vessels for the next generations in the play and they are considered to be useful and precious as long as they preserve their fertility because what is important for a man is the continuity of his lineage with legal successions. For this reason, the importance of a boy is emphasized at the very beginning of the play:

Camillo:
 You have an unspeakable
 comfort of your young prince Mamillius. It is a
 gentleman of the greatest promise that ever came
 into my note. (I, i, pp.35-38)

As an heir, Mamillius' existence is very crucial for the future of Leontes' lineage and kingdom. Therefore, his death, immediately after Hermione's trial scene creates great tension in the society and Leontes is continually advised to remarry and have a legal heir again:

Dion:
 What holier than, for royalty's repair,
 For present comfort and for future good,
 To bless the bed of majesty again
 With a sweet fellow to't? (V, i, pp.38-41)

When compared to the death of Mamillius, the death of Hermione is not so important for the patriarchal men since another woman capable of giving birth can replace Hermione and compensate for Leontes' loss by producing him new heirs. As De Beauvoir states, "the female, to a greater extent than the male, is the prey of the species" (qtd. in Ortner, 1974, p.74) because her biology becomes her fate. Ecofeminism rejects a woman's identification with a womb. Like her mother, Perdita's reproductive role is celebrated at the end of the play when her real identity as a princess comes out although she has been formerly assaulted by Polixenes when Florizel wants to marry her on the ground of her baseness as a shepherdess. In order to have "fair posterity" for his royal line and throne, Polixenes wants a royal daughter-in-law for his son. Unaware of her real identity at that time, Polixenes plans to ruin Perdita's beauty to prevent his grandson from marrying her since such a marriage will disgrace the whole family. He also attempts to intervene in the natural process of nature by trying to create a new kind of flowers. By equating nature and women through their fertility, man strictly controls both nature and women to prevent unwanted weeds from growing to minimize the threats and dangers against him. He uses both agriculture and husbandry "to combat weeds and soil sterility through fencing, tilling, manuring and draining the land" (Merchant, 1995, p.37).

Through the women's "involvement with the natural functions surrounding reproduction", they are considered "as more a part of nature than man is" (Ortner, 1974, p.76). In the play, Hermione, under the effect of a patriarchal society, also affirms the connection between nature and women because of their reproductive features. She defines Mamillus as the "first-fruits of my body" as if she were a tree in nature (p.104). Because of her loyalty and chastity, Hermione's body is compared to the land in Sicilia. The moment Leontes begins to suspect Hermione's infidelity, his countenance also begins to change as if "he had lost some province and a region/Loved as he loves himself" (pp. 443-445). For Leontes, Hermione is like one of his lands and the loss of her fidelity is equal to his loss of a land to an enemy. For this reason, she is accused of being a traitor who betrays both her husband and her country. His resemblance of Hermione to a piece of land or garden has also been seen when Hermione decides to enter the garden with Polixenes at the beginning of the play, which arouses suspicion in Leontes:

Hermione:
If you would seek us,
We are yours i' th' garden. Shall's attend you there? (I, ii, pp.222-223)

Since Leontes identifies her corporeal body with a piece of land, her entrance into the garden with Polixenes means that she allows Polixenes to penetrate her body. "Forbidden love", states Tigner (2012), "was associated with the garden since the Middle Ages", and "the Medieval garden or hortus conclusus, enclosed by a wall and filled with fruit trees, song birds, fountains, trellises, raised grassy benches, secret loges, and flower beds provided private spaces particularly advantageous to illicit activities" (p.116). Therefore, with her supposed adultery, Leontes loses not only his wife but also his lands and country, which all lose their meaning along with Hermione:

Leontes:
then the world and all that's in 't is nothing,
The covering sky is nothing, Bohemia nothing;
My wife is nothing. (I, ii, pp. 356-358)

Leontes degrades her wife by reducing her to a vagina since the word *nothing* is a euphemism for vagina in the Elizabethan Era (Cohen, 1987, p.219).

In addition to the woman's physical body which has been equated with nature, the social roles expected from woman and nature play a great role in their oppression. The division of labour and the assignment of cultural and social roles have been made on the basis of gender according to different physiological features women and men are supposed to have in patriarchal societies. Since women's social roles are determined by their reproductive capabilities, they are expected to look after their children and attend all their needs along with all other household chores in addition to their responsibilities towards their husbands and parents. Due to their heavy burden, women are entrapped in the domestic sphere with no access to the privileges or advantages of cultural or social life. Both nature and women are backgrounded and appreciated only for the services they provide for men without any recognition of their intrinsic value.

At the very beginning of the play, Hermione keeps her silence while Polixenes and Leontes are talking because she is not accepted as rational and intelligent enough to have a word in the realm of men. In all her life, Hermione is believed to speak just twice in a proper way. Her first speech is the moment when she utters "I am yours for ever" (p.134) and the second time is when she can "entreat his [Polixenes'] stay" the moment her husband asks her to do so (p.124). Her first speech "earned a royal husband; /Th' other for some while a friend" (pp.137-38). Hermione is pictured as a 'thing' whose only function is to satisfy her husband sexually and emotionally with her body, speech, and behaviour.

Moreover, the lack of access to the cultural world and restriction to the domestic sphere bring about her dependency on nature. Throughout the play, Hermione is represented as a daughter, wife, and a mother. She is first seen with her pregnant belly, which refers to her sexuality, womanhood, and wifehood, then with his son, Mamillus, which refers to her motherhood, and lastly she is seen while praying for being heard and helped by her father, “[t]he Emperor of Russia”, as a daughter (pp.127). She is never perceived, recognized or represented as an independent individual with authentic identity. Hermione, who is culturally conditioned to accept her self image as determined by patriarchy and thus internalizes her imposed identity which requires docility, seems to be satisfied with the roles she is assigned to and cannot complain about or give up on her roles, because fulfilling her roles is the only objective she has in her life, and she defines herself through these roles:

Hermione:
A fellow of the royal bed, which owe
A moiety of the throne, a great king’s daughter,
The mother to a hopeful prince. (III, ii, pp. 39-41)

However, her motherly and wifely duties are interrupted because of the fancies of her husband:

Leontes:
Bear the boy hence. He shall not come about her;
Away with him, and let her sport herself. (II, i, pp. 74-75)

When she is deprived of her womanly roles strictly attached to her, there is no need for her to live any longer because she loses all she has and a woman should have in the patriarchal world:

To me can life be no commodity.
The crown and comfort of my life, your favour,
I do give lost...
My second joy
And first-fruits of my body, from his presence
I am barred, like one infectious. My third comfort
Starred most unluckily, is from my breast,
The innocent milk in its most innocent mouth,
Haled out to murder (III, ii, pp.100-108).

Hermione defines herself in relation to the males around her since her mindset, behavioural patterns and perception of the self are shaped as a result of her gender roles attributed to her due to her biology. Women assume the predetermined social roles and features attributed to them without questioning. It is because of this fact that Hermione automatically acknowledges that she is a tempter, causing the fall of her husband and men in general:

Th’ offenses we have made you do we’ll answer,
If you first sinned with us, and that with us
You did continue fault, and that you slipped not
With any but with us (I, ii, pp. 105-108).

Hermione is culturally conditioned to believe that all women are tempters and sources of all other sins in the world. A woman, unlike a man, cannot manage to establish herself as an individual. Nancy Chodorow, Evelyn Fox Keller, and Dorothy Dinnerstein maintain that a female child cannot develop a ‘Self’ because she identifies herself with her mother while a male child achieves manhood through his

separation from his mother and women in general (Donner, 1997, pp.379-388). If he cannot achieve this separation, he cannot find a place in the outside world.

Mamillus could not manage this separation properly in the play no matter how hard he strives to do so. Throughout the play, he feels disturbed and frustrated to exist and function in the female sphere; however, he cannot find a place for himself in a male sphere because of his young age. He appears three times all throughout the play. The first one is when his father asks whether he is his "calf" (p.161) to make sure that he is his legal son in Act I scene II. In that scene, until his father talks to him, he waits in silence, lacking courage and self-confidence for self-assertion. His second appearance is in Act II scene I in which he is with women. Unlike the first act, he does not wait to be spoken to, but he takes the initiative to initiate the conversation with the women and he talks about their beauty. This courage comes from his cultural teaching that he has superiority over women because men are far better than women in many ways. His sense of uneasiness and discomfort when he is in the presence of men disappears when he is in the company of women: they "speak to me as if/I were a baby still", not a man (pp.7-8). The last time we see him is when Leontes comes to take him from his mother to deprive Hermione of motherhood. Afterwards, Mamillus is only talked about and his death is announced by a servant. He dies because he cannot develop 'Self'. The oedipalized Mamillus fails to break away from his mother. The root of his name, Mamilla, means "breast" or "teat" (Synder,1999, p.4), which emphasizes his close connection with his mother's body.

Unlike the cultural ecofeminism that celebrates the biological women-nature connection for their mutual liberation, other strands of ecofeminism refuse this connection and consider it as the root of their oppression since this approach is essentialist. Shakespeare, by disrupting and subverting traditional gender roles, acknowledges the social and cultural constructedness of gender roles. The subversion of gender roles in the play reflects the ecofeminist idea that one is not born as a man just as a woman is not born as a woman, but they are made a woman and a man (qtd. in Butler,1986, p.35). It can be concluded that the behaviours and roles we play in society are not biologically predetermined as cultural ecofeminists claim, but they are socially, culturally, and environmentally constructed. For this reason, liberal ecofeminists ask for gender equality and equity for women in the cultural world of men, especially in education and workplaces. With their intelligence and rationality, Hermione and Paulina display that women have capacities, skills and abilities other than those required for wifehood and motherhood. For instance, Paulina acts as a counsellor for the King and Hermione impresses the male governors with her speech, showing that "a lady's 'verily' is /As potent as a lord's" (I, ii, 64-65). Ecofeminists claim that women are not devalued because of their bodies but because of the patriarchal understanding which associates women with nature to oppresses and exploit them together.

Merchant states that the equation of women and nature has been epistemologically and linguistically produced. From the linguistic perspective women are described in terms of nature or animals and similarly, feminine features are attributed to nature. Perdita is expected to dance like "a wave o' th' sea" (p.167) or "blossom" like a flower in Sicilia. To Gaard, "one of the tasks of ecofeminists has been to expose [. . .] the ways in which feminizing nature and naturalizing or animalizing women has served as justification for the domination of women, animals, and the earth" (qtd. in Estok, 2007, p.71). Paulina is compared to Antigonus' horses in the stable by her husband. He vows to "keep my stables where/I lodge my wife" (pp.162-163) if Hermione betrays her husband. Whenever a woman fails to fit into the structures of patriarchy, she is immediately brought to the level of animals or other natural phenomena which are also considered as others and below the men in the anthropocentric world.

Epistemologically, "Vandana Shiva claims that women have a special connection to the environment through their daily interactions with it" (Biswas, 2013, p.154). Perdita is a shepherdess who knows to "milk [...] ewes", and she has great knowledge about the flora and fauna although she has no formal education. However, it is not only Perdita who has the knowledge of nature and hands-on experience

with nature. Shakespeare creates male characters that have certain knowledge of nature, which destabilizes the man-culture/woman-nature dichotomy. The old shepherd, for instance, knows what might happen to his sheep when they are lost: "by the/seaside, browsing of ivy" (pp.73-74). Here, Shakespeare again turns the woman-nature connection upside-down.

Ecofeminists agree that patriarchal religion, science, mindset and dualistic structures are the main causes of the degradation of women, nature, and animals. As a result of Eve's disobedience "the valence of woman is bad; the end valence of nature is bad" (Merchant, 2004, p.12). Since then, both nature and women have been regarded as evils that should be fought against to recreate the lost Eden in the world. However, in *The Winter's Tale*, neither nature nor women are reflected as totally evil. Two different ideas about women and nature appear: one is "sacred lady", "gracious mistress", "precious creature", "spotless", and the symbol of "honesty and honour" (I, ii, pp. 97; 288; 542; II, i, p.158; II, ii, p.14) like benevolent, fertile, and abundant nature which allows Perdita to blossom there, and the other is a tempter, an "audacious lady", "a mankind witch", "a most intelligencing bawd", "a callet/ of boundless tongue", "a gross hag", "lewd-tongued wife", (II, iii, pp. 50, 84, 85, 116-117, 137, 213). For this reason, "[l]ike wild chaotic nature, women needed to be subdued and kept in their place" (Merchant, 1990, p.132), and patriarchal men need the help of science and technology to subdue and control them as Polixenes claims:

You see, sweet maid, we marry
A gentler scion to the wildest stock,
And make conceive a bark of baser kind
By bud of nobler race: this is an art
Which does mend nature, change it rather, but
The art itself is nature. (IV, iv, pp.10-114)

A cultural man regards himself as the subject, master, and the self while all the rest are otherized, objectified, and made subservient:

Civilized Man Says: I am Self, I am Master, all the rest is other -outside, below, underneath, subservient. I own, I use, I explore, I exploit, I control. What I do is what matters. What I want is what matter is for. I am that I am, and the rest is women and the wilderness, to be used as I see fit. (Plant, 1997, p.126)

Despite the effort of ecofeminism and ecocriticism to overcome the dichotomies like culture and nature, men and women, which prioritize the former and devalue the latter, the patriarchal man continues to reinforce dualistic notions to justify his dual suppression of women and nature by creating a hierarchical order in the society and to vindicate the logic of domination by reducing "the diversity to two categories: A or not A", and "second part of the dualism is not only subordinate but in service to the first. Women serve men; nature serves culture, animals serve humans; people of colour serve white people" (Adams, 1993, p.2).

Social ecologists see hierarchy as the root cause of all forms of oppression and they distinguish patriarchy, which is "a male-dominated system of social relations and values" from hierarchy, which "refers to relationships of command and obedience enforced by (patriarchal) social structure and institutions" (Birkeland, 1993, p.17). Shakespeare, as a member of a highly hierarchical society, gives importance to the protection of hierarchical structures in his plays. Firstly, there arises a chaos because of the ruptures in the hierarchy, and then the social order is brought back. In *The Winter's Tale*, gender and class hierarchies get disrupted at first but then recovered with the restoration of patriarchy at the end.

Since women's physiological functions like reproduction, nurturing, and child-rearing associate women with nature, "their social role is lower on the cultural scale than that of the male" (Merchant, 1990, p.144). Although Hermione and Paulina who strive and manage to find a place in the cultural world of men, they are continually reminded of their social roles and duties as a wife and mother, and required to be obedient and dutiful to their husbands. Paulina challenges this order when she attempts to overcome the males around her to protect Hermione, which creates great anxiety in men at that time. Perdita also suffers from the gender hierarchy as well as the hierarchy based on social classes. Due to her supposed low class origin, she is humiliated by Polixenes when she decides to marry Florizel.

There are two approaches to the hierarchy in the play. While in the first approach social classes play an important role in human relations, as can be seen in Polixenes' attitude towards Perdita and the Old Shepherd, the second approach tries to show the constructedness of the hierarchy, as can be seen in the sudden lapse of the Old Shepherd and his son in the social ladder. Polixenes has noble blood and a royal name and wants his son to continue that royal line by marrying a noble woman; however, Florizel is believed to degrade his royal lineage by getting involved with his inferior. However, since nobleness is believed to be a God-given feature, true blood cannot be hidden. Despite her supposed inferiority and low class, Perdita's nobleness comes into sight: her "majesty.../the affection/ of nobleness which nature shows above/ her breeding, and many other evidences" surprise even Polixenes who supports the idea that a hierarchical order is a God-given order and everybody should respect and accept it (V, ii, pp. 38; 40-41). On the other hand, the fictiveness of the social classes and hierarchy is emphasized through social mobility, which makes it easy to change one's social class by changing clothes or marrying someone above his/her status:

Leontes:
My lord,
Is this the daughter of a king?
Florizel:
She is,
When once she is my wife. (V, i, pp. 255-258)

From this perspective, there is no reason for aristocracy not to accept Perdita in their environment since it is possible to move up the social ladder, as can be seen in the case of Shepherd and his son. In spite of their low-birth, they become part of nobility at the end of the play since they have fostered Perdita:

Shepherd's son:
See you these clothes? Say
you see them not and think me still no gentleman
born. You were best say these robes are not gentlemen
born. Give me the lie, do, and try whether I am
not now a gentleman born. (V, ii, pp. 140-144)
Autolycus:
I know you are now, sir, a gentleman born. (V, ii, pp. 145)
Shepherd's son:
So you have- but I was a gentleman
born before my father. For the king's son took me
by the hand and called me brother, and then the
two kings called my father brother, and then the
Prince my brother and the Princess my sister called
my father father; and so we wept, and there was the
first gentlemanlike tears that ever we shed. (V, ii, pp. 149-155)

Ecofeminism views hierarchy as a man-made creation: “there is no natural hierarchy; human hierarchy is projected on to nature and then used to justify social domination” (Gruen, 1993, p. 80). It is the man who classifies the natural elements just as he classifies human beings to oppress and exploit them both. However, the same sun shines over all people and the same rain wets people regardless of their ages, genders, colours and classes:

I was not much afeard; for once or twice
I was about to speak and tell him plainly
The selfsame sun that shines upon his court
Hides not his visage from our cottage, but
Looks on alike. (IV, iv, pp.520-524)

Ecofeminism is against all types of oppression and maintains that “we cannot end the exploitation of nature without ending human oppression, and vice versa” (Birkeland, 1993, p.19). Ecofeminism stands against not only patriarchy or hierarchy but also matriarchy which is another way of oppression. “Its goal is not just to change who wields power, but to transform the structure of power itself” (Starhawk, qtd. in Murphy, 2000, p.86). Therefore, rather than hierarchical structures including patriarchy and matriarchy, ecofeminists call for, as Murphy (2000) names, “heterarchy” (p. 88) which refers to an egalitarian or a partnership society in which there is no superiority of one gender over the other:

The real alternative to patriarchy is not matriarchy, which is only the other side of the dominator coin. The alternative, now revealed to be the original direction of our cultural evolution, is what I call a partnership society: a way of organizing human relations in which beginning with the most fundamental difference in our species- the difference between female and male- diversity is not equated with inferiority or superiority. (Eisler, 1990, p. 28)

In the play, Shakespeare presents both patriarchy and matriarchy as two oppressive forms. In addition to the oppressed women under the rule of men, there are men who are humiliated and oppressed by women. The oppression of a man by a woman also disturbs the audience and is not very well received. Paulina, for instance, is harshly criticized when she rebukes Leontes:

First Lord:
Say no more:
Howe'er the business goes, you have made fault
I' the boldness of your speech. (III, ii, pp.239-241)

Since “life on earth is an interconnected web, not a hierarchy”, what ecofeminists call for is an egalitarian world in which there are no species, gender, class or social hierarchies which see women inferior because of their bodily features and men superior because of their physical and psychological features (qtd. in Gruen, 1993, p. 80). In order to create an egalitarian and ecocentric society, the oppression of women and exploitation of nature by the patriarchy and ranking people and nature according to the rules of hierarchy should be strongly avoided because they are all socially, culturally, and economically constituted.

4. Conclusion

This article shows that the domination of women goes hand in hand with the domination of nature in the patriarchal societies. In *The Winter's Tale* Shakespeare depicts a patriarchal and hierarchical society in which women and men are assigned certain roles according to their genders and women are exploited and oppressed by their male partners. Yet, Shakespeare gives a chance to women to explore their potential and discover what they are capable of doing outside the patriarchy, as can be seen in the case of Paulina or Hermione.

Shakespeare puts the emphasis on the fact that man and nature are linked to each other by the mutual needs and benefits and thus, man should stop acting as masters or oppressors. By creating characters who are part of nature, Shakespeare shows the interconnectedness and interdependence between human and nature. He is certainly aware of the hardships of the natural world and pastoral life while he presents the corruption and artificiality of the civilized life. Rather than suggesting that nature is better than culture, Shakespeare shows that when the corruption and corrupted characters are cleansed away from the cultural life, culture will also turn out to be a liveable place.

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