

INTRODUCTION

Life is unequal, particularly in the relationships between men, women, and nature. In Western culture, this inequality arises from traditional patriarchy, which gives men the power to control and exploit all living beings considered inferior, including women and nature (Valera, 2018). Primarily, this system promotes a worldview that encourages domination over women, denying their humanity and right to equality. It also marginalizes women's contributions to society and wealth creation, often using violence to displace them from their livelihoods and cut off their access to natural resources (Shiva, 2014).

Modern feminism theories have emerged to address the injustices faced by women. These theories aim to eliminate gender stereotypes and facilitate women to achieve equality in all aspects of life socially, politically, professionally, personally, economically, aesthetically, and psychologically (Bressler, 2011). Achieving equality means establishing a society where gender does not determine an individual's opportunities, rights, or treatments. It involves dismantling stereotypes and barriers restricting individuals based on gender and ensuring equitable access to opportunities for success across all aspects of life. However, ending injustice against women must also include ending injustice against nature. Patriarchal systems, in particular, tend to control, dominate, and exploit nature, such as large-scale deforestation and the excessive extraction of natural resources, leading to environmental degradation (Shiva, 2014). A concept is needed to address and stop patriarchal behaviors that led to the environmental movement (Gaard, 2017).

In Western culture, the intersection of feminism and the environmental movement is brought into the concept of ecofeminism. This theory examines the interconnected oppression of women and the environment, including nature, animals, and marginalized groups. French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne coined the term ecofeminism in her 1974 book *Le Féminisme ou la Mort (Feminism or Death)*, defined it as the parallel exploitation of nature and women, with patriarchy responsible for both ecological degradation and women's low status in society (Warren, 1987 as cited in Valera, 2018). According to Freyne (2018), ecofeminism introduces a new worldview that blurs the traditional dualistic separation of men and women from the natural world, encouraging the idea that all living things are deeply connected and part of a unified whole.

Plumwood (1993, as cited in Gaard, 2017) stated that the social construct of dualism reinforces gender hierarchy and environmental exploitation by establishing values into animated/inanimate, nature/culture, human/nonhuman, and male/female as the foundation for patriarchal dominance. The concept of dualism ultimately leads to violence against groups perceived as weaker. In this case, patriarchy considers nature and women as inferior, resulting in various forms of violence: direct, structural, and cultural (Galtung, 1969, as cited in Eriyanti, 2017).

Freyne (2018) noted the two models defining ecofeminism: the ecological self and interdependence. Ecofeminism proposes the concept of the ecological self that emphasizes the deep connection between nature and women. This perspective recognizes women as integral parts of the natural world and emphasizes their strong connections to all ecosystems (Freyne, 2018). The ecological self also promotes a sense of responsibility for the environment, encouraging women to move beyond domination and embrace a relationship with nature built on care traditionally associated with feminine roles.

Meanwhile, interdependence is an inseparable dependency between nature and women. A significant similarity between women and nature is the concept of maternity: both are seen as mothers. In patriarchal ideology, nature is categorized as female and holds a marginalized position due to the dominance system. A crucial aspect of ecofeminism hinges on the analogy between humanity's dependence on nature as a child's dependence on their mother and vice versa. This dependence, however, introduces a complex dynamic that has the potential for exploitation because patriarchal societies tend to view both women and nature as passive and exploitable. At the same time, men are seen as rational, dominant, and entitled to control. In response, ecofeminism attempts to subvert this marginalization of women in their relation to nature by emphasizing the connection between them through the concept of care (Valera, 2018).

In its critical lens on literary works, film is one of the tools to raise the urgency and awareness of ecofeminism. This theme is explored in the film adaptation of *Where the Crawdads Sing* (2022) by Olivia Newman, based on Delia Owens' novel (2018). The film presents the story of Catherine Danielle "Kya" Clark, a young girl abandoned by her family and implicated in a murder. She develops a deep connection with the marshland and the ecosystem around her. Other female characters, such as Ma (Kya's mother) and Mabel (the wife of Jumpin, owner of Jumpin's Bait & Gas), also exemplify the relationship with nature. In contrast, some male-dominant characters: Pa (Kya's father), Chase Andrew (a well-known city guy), a social

service worker, and the government of Barkley Cove represent the concept of patriarchy that tends to be violent against women and exploit nature to reconstruct it into a hotel. However, there are also male characters who are not violent against Kya and nature, such as Tate (Kya's boyfriend, later becoming her husband) and Jumpin (Mabel's husband and the owner of Jumpin's Bait & Gas). The movie is a great example of the relationship between feminism and the environmental movement in Western culture.

Where the Crawdads Sing (2022) has been an interesting subject in literary studies. Unfortunately, most research mainly focused on its original novel by Delia Owens (2018). Salisbury (2023) conducted an ecocritical analysis focusing on the novel's voice, agency, and urgency to explore the protagonist's relationship with her environment and raise readers' ecological awareness. Another research discussed the positive impact of the environment of the marsh in the book, which played a primary role in making Kya more skillful to women her age by using Garrard's (2004) concepts of ecocriticism (Faradhila, 2021). Research also revealed that the kinds of violence experienced by Kya in the original novel were direct and indirect, using Galtung's (1990) theory of violence combined with Shulamith Firestone's (1970) radical feminism approach (Lailatussyifa, 2021). Gale (2021) also found the kind of abuses that affected Kya's life and her efforts to respond to the patriarchy using Gaard's (2017) ecofeminism theory and dualism theory by Val Plumwood (1993). The study examined how the relationship between women and nature led to eco-social transformation as a form of empowerment.

The concept of ecofeminism also has been explored in many notable films. Recently, a study by Bhat et al. (2024) studied the connection between the oppression of women and environmental degradation in the Indian movie *Sherni* (2021) while criticizing the capitalist systems that drove this exploitation. In *Annihilation* (2018), Alibasjah (2022) used Tong's (2006) ecofeminism theory to examine the female protagonist's response to nature's exploitation, alongside an analysis of the film's cinematography and script.

There has been little research with limited topics discussed on this film adaptation. A study used Agamben's (1998) theory of Homo Sacer to analyze Kya as a character who was abandoned and rejected by society, living with her identity as the "Marsh Girl" (Susanto et al., 2023). The portrayal of characterization is further researched in the comparative study conducted by Mauliddiyah (2023), which compared how characters are portrayed in both the novel and film versions using Pamusuk Eneste's (1991) theory of ecranisation. The study employed literary criticism, revealing ten additions, 24 reductions, and 12 variations in the

novel and film. Meanwhile, Winanti (2023) found 27 reductions, six additions, and 12 modifications in themes, plots, characters, settings, styles, and tones.

In contrast to previous studies mentioned above, there has been restricted discussion of ecofeminism in the film adaptation of *Where the Crawdads Sing* (2022). Thus, the current study aims to fill in the gap. This research seeks to explore how *Where the Crawdads Sing* (2022) portrays the relationship between nature and the protagonist and how patriarchy violence them. Additionally, it also examines nature and women's empowerment to resist patriarchal exploitation. By examining these aspects, the study can contribute to the ongoing discussion on literary criticism of gender and environmental justice.

The research uses Freyne's (2018) two models of ecofeminism as the theoretical framework. In addition, this research employs film theory analysis by Bordwell, Thompson, and Smith (2017) as the analytical tool to analyze the cinematic aspects. Hence, the study raises the following questions: (1) How does *Where the Crawdads Sing* (2022) portray the relationships between nature and the protagonist? (2) How do the male characters commit violence to nature and the protagonist? (3) In what ways do nature and female characters oppose patriarchal exploitation?