


## Feminine Care and Environmental Considerations: An Ecofeminist Reading of Forugh Farrokhzad's "I Pity the Garden"

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### Abstract

Environmental crises and their consequences, among which are the growing environmental concerns, have given rise to new theories in environmental ethics, which aims to explore certain rights in ethical considerations, such as Ecofeminism. Ecofeminism investigates gender and environmental concerns to make a meaningful connection between women, environment, and their emancipation from dominance. In all three conceptual, experimental, and epistemological aspects of this theory, women are relatively closer to nature than men; this in turn renders them more sentimental and vulnerable toward the destruction of nature. In her "I Pity the Garden," Forugh Farrokhzad narrates the sympathetic feelings of women regarding the death of the garden. This analytic-descriptive study is an ecofeminist reading of the poem which investigates the relations between the characters' indifference toward the death of the garden and the indifference toward the environmental crises on a global scale. This article claims that the masculine discourse of negligence is rooted in anthropocentrism, generation gap, economic interests, arms race, and philosophical despair. Likewise, feminine discourse might suffer from similar apathy due to over-sensitivity toward the destruction of nature, superstitious beliefs, reliance on synthetic life, and distancing from nature. At the same time, the inclusion of feminine ethics of care in relation to nature can be influential in preventing environmental destruction.

**Keywords:** Ecofeminism, Women, Environment, Forugh Farrokhzad

### Extended Abstract

#### 1. Introduction

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Women and nature are among the most recurrent concepts in Forugh's poetry, even though her conception of nature and women differs from her conception reality. She speaks of a woman who lives and endures her life with all its hardships, desires, and dreams. On the other hand, her descriptions of nature represent her present language; in other words, they reflect her true self. For Forugh, nature is mostly an object, which through her creative mind, signifies its meanings. These meanings are affected by point of view, emotions, excitement, and cultural and social elements that surround the subject. As a result, Forugh's nature is not like the kind of nature we understand in ecology or ecosystem. Her "I Pity the Garden," has the potential to represent her femininity and the way she poetically describes nature; it also functions as an ecofeminist tool, which exposes her father's and her brother's different sensitivity toward the garden.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

Ecofeminism is a movement which investigates the complex relations between nature's dominance and women's exploitation. The ecofeminists regard most of the Western thought as influenced by the "oppression mentality" which is the dualistic mentality that prefers and values one side of the duality over the other. Ecofeminism categorises the interaction between women and nature as experimental interaction, conceptual interaction, cultural/symbolic interaction, and epistemological interaction. This study is concerned with the second categorisation, according to which, women are closer to nature and more sensitive to ecological changes.

## **3. Methodology**

The present analytical-descriptive study aims to investigate Forugh Farrokhzad's "I Pity the Garden" in light of ecofeminism. Also, the article studies the function of gender in environmental sensitivity represented in reactions shown to the death of the garden.

## **4. Discussion and Analysis**

The central incident in Forugh's narrative is the death of her father's garden. The poem probes into the characters' reactions to this incident. The characters of the poem include Forugh, her father, her mother, her brother, and her sister. The analysis of their reaction shows that women are more sympathetic to the incident. On the other hand, men are indifferent toward the death of the garden due to economic difficulties, personal problems, philosophical

despair, and short-sightedness. Although the three women in the narrative are more sensitive than men, they also have different reactions to the incident. Forugh's reaction is intertwined with maternal emotions, knowledge, awareness, and responsibility. As a result of her insensitivity, inaction, and alienation, she feels vulnerable and lonely.

### 5. Conclusion

An ecofeminist reading of Forugh Farrokhzad's "I Pity the Garden" shows that the poem symbolically portrays the garden as a representation of ecological destruction which endangers the present world and the future of the earth. At the same time, the reaction of the family and their reasoning symbolises - in a broader sense - the passivity and indifference of nations toward the environmental crises. The findings of the research reveal that the main reasons behind these indifferences are generation gap, anthropocentrism, unbridled urbanity, economic interests, superstitious beliefs, introversion, consumerism, and negligence. This study investigates the aforementioned reasons in light of environmental ethics. At the same time, Forugh's women are more concerned with nature which - according to feminism - is due to their maternal ethics of care in protecting the environment. On the other hand, men's materialistic, abstract, and philosophical approaches combined with their arms race and belligerence prevent them from understanding the ongoing reality. It should be noted that Forugh regards wise and calculated actions, alongside maternal emotions, as influential factors which can promote the sense of responsibility towards the environment.

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