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自然与性别的双重危机之剖析:
从生态女性角度解读《羚羊与秧鸡》

Probing into the Dual Crises of Nature and Gender:
An Ecofeminist Reading of *Oryx and Crane*

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Abstract

As a representative contemporary female writer with strong ecofeminist consciousness in Canada, Margaret Atwood has been devoting herself to reflections on human destiny. She tries to explore the parallel relationships between human and nature, and between man and woman. In addition, she opposes the anthropocentric and patriarchal way of thinking, trying to promote a new relationship in which human and nature, man and woman may live in harmony.

Oryx and Crake, one of her most outstanding works, is a novel describing how humans driven by greed have involved themselves in the enormous disasters brought by the misuse of science and technology. Many scholars have done profound studies of its multiple features, including dystopia, intertextuality, parody, etc. Based on previous studies, adopting Karen Warren's theory of a patriarchal oppressive conceptual framework, this thesis approaches *Oryx and Crake* from an ecofeminist perspective, aiming to explore the connections between nature and women, ecological crises and gender discrimination in the patriarchal cultures in *Oryx and Crake*, thereby revealing the roots of the dual crises largely in terms of anthropocentric and patriarchal domination. The textual analysis is aimed to trace the root of the dual crises to "the logic of domination", which is claimed to be the core of a patriarchal oppressive conceptual framework.

Finally, the significance of the study in reality is to make humans reconceive the survival and human development with a warning against the present ecological crisis and gender trouble. The conclusion of the thesis is that by setting up a system of "healthy, life-enhancing, nourishing, and restorative" value, humans will fundamentally overcome the ecological crises and resolve the gender issue.

Key Words: *Oryx and Crake*; Ecofeminism; Patriarchal oppressive conceptual framework; Human; Nature; Gender; Species

摘要

作为加拿大当代文学的代表人物，以及一个具有深切生态女性意识的作家，玛格丽特·阿特伍德用自己的小说创作书写着个体对人类命运的反思。她反对人类中心主义和父权制世界观，试图探寻普遍存在于社会中的贬低自然与贬低女人这两种现象之间的特殊关系，倡导一种人与自然、男性与女性和谐相处的新型关系。

《羚羊与秧鸡》是玛格丽特·阿特伍德迄今为止最具影响力的一部生态文学作品，它生动地描写了人类在贪欲和妄想的驱动下使科技畸形发展所带来的巨大灾难。基于已有的各类研究，本文运用凯伦·沃伦的压迫性框架理论，从生态女性主义的角度挖掘小说所包含的生态危机和性别歧视的元素，探寻女性与自然之间的种种天然联系，考察自然和女性在父权制文化背景下的生存困境，解析父权制的压迫性观念框架下人类对自然和女性双重统治背后的“统治逻辑”。

本研究的现实意义是促使人们反思人类生存和发展的模式，对目前的生态危机和人际关系危机起到警示作用。最后，本文得出结论：通过建立“健康，提升生活，滋养，恢复性”的价值观，人类才能从根本上解决生态危机和性别歧视问题。

关键词：《羚羊与秧鸡》 生态女性主义 压迫性框架 人类 自然 性别 物种

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Introduction

Margaret Eleanor Peggy Atwood has been internationally recognized as both “the queen of Canadian literature” and the leading figure in the contemporary Canadian literature. She is a most prolific writer, whose works have been published in more than forty languages. Throughout her writing career since 1956, she has published 7 collections of short fiction, 8 children’s books, 17 poetry collections, and 10 books of non-fiction, but she is best known for her 13 novels, including *The Edible Woman* (1969), *The Handmaid’s Tale* (1985), *Cat’s Eye* (1989), *The Robber Bride* (1994), *Alias Grace* (1996), and *The Blind Assassin* (2000). Some of them have been adapted into films. In addition, as a writer of radio and television scripts, she has edited *The Best American Short Stories* (1989), and *The New Oxford Book of Canadian Short Stories in English* (1995). Due to her literary achievements, she has received numerous awards including Governor General’s Award and honorary degrees from University of Toronto, Oxford University, Cambridge University, etc. Not only is she an international literary icon, but her reputation has grown steadily in many fields besides literature. She is current Vice-President of PEN International in support of Canadian cultural independence. Moreover, with strong ecological consciousness, she is one of the Joint Honorary Presidents of the Rare Bird Society within Bird Life International. In the past 30 years, she has been active in world literature as a representative of Canadian literature and is the fifth on the list of the 100 most influential Canadians of the twentieth century (Graham 31-32) because of her contributions to Canadian national culture.

As these achievements have established Atwood’s position in Canadian literature as an outstanding writer, she has drawn more and more attention from scholars at home and abroad. *Margaret Atwood Studies* is the journal of the Margaret Atwood Society set up in 1984 to focus primarily on Margaret Atwood and her works. In these researches, *Margaret Atwood: Conversations* by Earl G. Ingersoll covers interviews

with Atwood by other writers, including Graeme Gibson, Joyce Carol Oates, Geoff Hancock, providing a forum for Atwood to talk about her own works, her career as a writer, as well as about feminism and Canadian cultural nationalism. Rosemary Sullivan also provides extensive information on Atwood's biography and works. In 2002, Reingard M. Nischik, a renowned German expert on Atwood, made a substantial scholarly introduction to Atwood's oeuvre by bringing together critics from several countries to attest to the international influence of Atwood's writings. In her later study on Atwood in 2009, Nischik analyzes the relationship between gender and genre in Atwood's works, explores how Atwood has developed these genres to be gender-sensitive in both content and form, and argues that gender and genre are inherently complicit in Atwood's works as they converge to critique the gender-biased designs of traditional genres. *Margaret Atwood* by Coral Ann Howells covers Atwood's works from the 1970s to 2003, drawing out her recurring themes of Canadian identity and wilderness, representations of women and female bodies, and history and its narration. *Margaret Atwood: A Critical Companion* by Nathalie Cooke offers a concise introduction to Atwood's published novels before 2004 and the central concerns motivating her writing. In particular, Cooke has "traced some of the sources of the ecological, nationalist, and feminist impulses in Atwood's work", indicating that "the lifestyle established by Atwood's father raised her consciousness about ecological awareness, and her mother's family modeled possibilities for women beyond the roles generally available to women of Atwood's own generation" (6-7). Moreover, Cook's study extends the dialogue surrounding Atwood's works in several important ways, as it illustrates how readings of Atwood's works can be significantly enriched through attention to the Canadian literary and cultural context, and argues that all of her novels can be read as satires that expose the society's double standards. *Margaret Atwood and the Labour of Literary Celebrity*, the latest research in 2013, is an in-depth examination of what it takes for an author to gain and maintain celebrity status, a rarity not only in the genre of literature, but in book-writing in general. By using unpublished material from Atwood's papers archived at University of Toronto, Lorraine York dissects Atwood's status from her support team to her use of technology.

Referring to a large amount of data in domestic and foreign research, Professor Fu Jun, a Chinese expert whose latest study of Atwood and her works discusses and analyzes in detail the growth of Atwood in terms of the impact of her family, the writing process and critics, has pointed out in particular that there are three characteristics in Atwood's works, namely "feminist tendency, nationalism and the consciousness of environmental protection. The three characteristics are unified as the same motif of her works, that is, survival" (293). Atwood has devoted her attention to female survival in the male-dominated society, the Canadian survival in the shadow of French and British colonial history and from the threat of American cultural invasion, and the survival of nature from the invasion and destruction of human civilization in the process of modernization.

Critics ascribe a long list of themes to her works: mythology, environmental degradation, women and the forces that shape them, victimization, identity, escape, guilt and responsibility, feminism and survival, but Atwood chooses not to label her works, believing that it will ruin her works for everybody else, and she offers one prevalent theme in her writing: life as a human being on the planet. Atwood expresses in her works her worry about and condemnation of humans' exploitation of nature, and her wish that both human and nature may live in harmony from the ecological perspective. In a nutshell, her ecological theme is reflected in the following two aspects: firstly, she criticizes the human abuse of science and technology causing damage to the environment; secondly, further attention is paid to the issues of human beings as victims of themselves and of animals as victims of human beings. In short, she hates the human behavior of simply pursuing economic development at the cost of the fragile eco-system, and reveals the horrors of its evil consequences with the hope of achieving the balance between social and economic development and of bringing the issue to the attention of scientists so that they can accommodate themselves to the synchronization of economic development and environmental protection accordingly.

Atwood's writing is also marked with very strong feminist consciousness, as she has been concerned about the survival of women in the patriarchal world. She has associated female survival with human survival. What would happen to human race if

we failed to cope with gender relationship? Therefore, in most of her works, on one hands, he insists on concerning about ecology and women; on the other hand, she expresses deep concern about the human future.

One of those works is the Man Booker Prize nominee *Oryx and Crake* (2003), which is so far Atwood's most impressive and bravest post-apocalyptic, speculative fiction centered on scientific technology having spiraled out of control and the resulting dystopia. In some ways, it is a sequel to Atwood's *The Handmaid's Tale* "which invents nothing we haven't already invented or started to invent" (qtd. in Bloom 94). The ecological problems in *Oryx and Crake* are portrayed as those which have occurred or are occurring in the real world; that is, human beings, for their own benefits, repeatedly violate the natural environment while nature punishes human beings and threatens their survival with a deteriorating living environment. As Atwood explained, "Every novel begins with a what if, and then sets forth its axioms. The what if of *Oryx and Crake* is simply What if we continue down the road we're already on? How slippery is the slope? What are our saving graces? Who's got the will to stop us?" (qtd. in Bouson 16). Although the novel fails to directly solve the ecological problems in the human community, it will make people aware of what they have done to nature, and help them to realize the negative impact of human civilization on nature. In this way, humans are able to take effective measures in time to protect the environment.

Although the book invites comparison to *The Handmaid's Tale*, the future Atwood evokes in *Oryx and Crake* is totally different. "In *The Handmaid's Tale*, the woes of the world could be laid at the door of Christianity run amok. In *Oryx and Crake* we're dealing with technology and genetic manipulation gone so horribly awry that, as the book opens, it looks very much like the end of the world" (Richards). In addition, there is a female world in *The Handmaid's Tale*, while a male world exists in *Oryx and Crake*. By using her conventional writing techniques: alternate presentation of the present (in the third person) and the past (in the first person), clever suspense design, and vivid innovation on words and expressions, *Oryx and Crake* examines the social, economic, scientific, and ethical consequences of technology. Gripping, scary,

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