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## Abstract

This paper attempts to analyze Essentialism as an ecofeminist approach in "ثؤلؤل", "Tho'lol", "A Wart 2016" written by the Kuwaiti female writer Mais Khaled Al-othman during the Iraqi occupation to Kuwait. Essentialism is a concept within the approach of Ecofeminism that seeks to highlight the connectedness between the environmental destruction and the female oppression. In "ثؤلؤل", "Tho'lol", "A Wart" Al-othman portrays the rape of a Kuwaiti girl by an Iraqi soldier during the Iraqi occupation to Kuwait which is in essence a rape to the whole country under occupation. Issues such as the social and familial oppression, unsupport and humiliation are also represented. The study also deals with the way Essentialism is exemplified in the selected novel where the connection between women and nature on the one hand and women and the destruction of the environment on the other hand is highlighted. So the present paper holds the view that violence against women is in fact violence against the environment, and the degradation of women's identity is the result of the destruction of the environment induced by wars.

**Keywords:** Ecofeminism – Essentialism- Violence, woman and nature- Trauma- Identity.

## Introduction

People are linked to nature and it is not possible to separate the fate of man from that of the earth. If destruction of the environment is inseparable to the destruction of the self, thus, violence against the environment is part and parcel of violence against the self. As a result, we can enjoy peace if we have a deep, healthy relationship with nature. Peace around people sneaks inside and inner peace and wars can never co-exist. For example, this situation is evident in Kuwaiti writing, especially after the Iraqi occupation to Kuwait.

Kuwaiti women's novel has attracted the attention of critics starting the early seventies of the twentieth century, since then it has achieved remarkable development ("Srank", "سرانك" 3). Ecofeminism is an interdisciplinary theory that has developed in the last few decades, includes both ecology and feminism and suitably apply to places that suffer disasters and wars. The feminist movement has received enough attention in Literature. It has eclipsed the idea of human rights- namely, freedom of women and equality with men- to a broader concept, which attempts to reformulate concepts, history, language, symbols, art and philosophy in a new vision that subsumes and benefits from the assumptions and perceptions of

feminism. In this context, the term "ecological feminism" is now widely circulating within feminist studies and writings, as well as within writings that deal with environmental issues (Longnecker1). Feminist thoughts consolidate new concepts and terms, that reshape our prevailing cultures, psychological and social perceptions and moral attributes.

The study attempts to analyse Essentialism in "ثؤلؤل", "Tho'lol", "A Wart" through answering the following research questions: (1) What are the impacts of the destroyed environment on the psychology and identity of women who whiteness war? (2) What are the psychological conflicts and problems that women face in war-made environment?(3) How Essentialism is portrayed in the selected text as one of the principles of Ecofeminism? In order to answer these questions, the paper discusses one of the novels written by a Kuwaiti female writer whitenssing the Iraqi occupation to Kuwait and portraying the destruction of a Kuwaiti family whose daughter was raped by an Iraqi soldier. The novel compellingly depicts the mistreatment and persecution of this Arab woman who, though brutally raped, is punished by society and family alike, despite of being clearly the victim.

## Methodology

There are many attempts to define ecofeminism; for example, Longenecker(1997), declares that “Mary Wollstonescraft’s *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), has always been concerned with the relation of women to nature” (1). Ecofeminism, is connected to the research closely related to peace on earth. Ynestra King in her essay “*Engendering a Peaceful Planet: Ecology, Economy, and Ecofeminism in Contemporary Context*” defines the term as “being connected to a new definition of national and planetary security which includes societies free of violence, with nature-friendly technologies and sustainable economies that are respectful of place and culture. In both ecofeminist theory and ecofeminist political activism, ecology and peace have been inextricably linked...” (15).

The term is also defined by the French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne in *Le Féminisme ou la Mort (Feminism or Death)* wherein she traces similarities between society’s contempt for women to human destruction of the environment. She also likens the subjection of women by men to the subjection of the nonhuman by human beings (Ingman 1). The concept of ecofeminism is well expressed by Greta Gard:

Ecofeminism is a theory that has evolved from various fields of feminist inquiry and activism: peace movements, labor movements, women's health care, and the anti-nuclear, environmental, and animal liberation movements. Drawing on the insights of ecology, feminism, and socialism, ecofeminism's basic premise is that the ideology which authorizes oppressions such as those based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species is the same ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature. (Any 8)

Ecofeminism arose in the 1970s along with the second-wave feminist movement and the green movement. That is why it

shares aspects from both disciplines. From the green movement it adapts the passive effect of human activities against nature and against the non-human in general, whereas the oppression of woman by society and by men as well hearkens directly back to feminism. According to Warren, it is an attempt to “unite the demands of the woman’s movement with those of the ecological movement in order to bring about a world and worldview that are not based on socioeconomic and conceptual structures of domination” (1). Longenecker argues that “women and nature share a subordinate and instrumental relationship to men; both are gendered ‘feminine’ as one of the means of the control; but, given women’s affiliation with nature, women have a unique responsibility to the health and survival of nature itself, to the care of the planet” (1)

Birkeland claims that ecofeminism is: “a value system, a social movement and a practice but it also offers a political analysis that explores the links between androcentricism and environmental destruction”( 18). Ariel Salleh states that there is a “parallel in men’s thinking between their right to exploit nature on the one hand and the use they make of women on the other” (qtd. in Birkeland 18). It is also known that women and nature are compared to mind and spirit. The real significance of Ecofeminism is connected with the “necessity of power relationship”; from power over to power to. Exploitation of nature cannot be ended without ending human oppression. Charlane Sprentak outlines it as “Identifying the dynamics—largely fear and resentment—behind the dominance of male over female is the key to comprehending every expression of patriarchal culture with its hierarchial, militaristic, mechanistic, industrial forms” (qtd. in Birkeland 19). Gretchen T. Legler states Ecofeminist literary criticism as “hybrid criticism, a combination of ecological or environmental criticism and

feminist literary criticism” (Warren, *Ecofeminism* 227).

The main principles that ecofeminists frequently practice are: (1) The necessity of fundamental social transformation, (2) the intrinsic values of everything in nature, (3) the rejection of the anthropocentric viewpoint, instrumentalist values the mechanistic models and the acceptance of a more biocentric views that can comprehend the interconnectedness of life processes, (4) Humans should not control nonhuman nature but should work with the land, (5) changing the fact of power based relationships and hierarchy, (6)integrating the false dualisms in the perception of reality, (7) the process is as important as the goal, (8) the personal is political and (9) the human subjugation and the ecological exploitation of the Male-controlled change of the nature of the system (Birkeland 20).

In addition, there are four main principles ecofeminists usually despise about.; Dualism, Incompleteness, Essentialism and Anti-rationalism. Dualism is an alternative to anthropocentrism looking at women as a homogenous whole in opposition to men. Incompleteness means that ecofeminists are partial or incomplete and regarded as childlike. When they start to gain confidence they are accused of being essentialists or reverse sexists. Ecofeminists claim that women has essential nature, biological connection and spiritual affinity with nature that men do not have. The ecofeminists also assert that they “highlight the patent irrationality of Patriarchy” (22) in which they called anti-rationalism. Suzan Griffin defines the term essentialism as a “Category in thought by which some feminists are accused of using the word woman, as pure idea or pure matter without the more sophisticated knowledge that woman is a fiction of the social construction of gender”( Warren, *Ecofeminism* 114).

Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva in their book *Ecofeminism* (1993) term Essentialism as one of the accusations

against Ecofeminists; “This critique stems mainly from the left which considers that not only the social world but nature too is socially constructed, following the constructivist school of thought” (160). David Kronlid in his work *Ecofeminism and Environmental Ethics* clarifies the point of Essentialism that “One important characteristic of ecofeminist ethics is its “double nature,” that is, the fact that it is rooted in feminism and environmentalism”(5). The study traces Essentialism in the selected novel as illustrated clearly in the whole novel how Al-othman compares between nature and women and the destruction of nature and the destruction of women during war.

According to Dadisi, the Kuwaiti novel was not very popular in the last century, but as a result of the outbreak of the second Gulf War and the political upheaval surrounding it, literature began to flourish. The Iraqi forces’ invasion of Kuwait profoundly ignited the literary energy of Kuwaiti women who, to this point, had not found a literary genre that enabled them to articulate the stabbing oppression of those women as successfully as the genre of the novel. The genre of the novel is most appropriate and effective for expressing oppressive suffering and unrelenting diversity ("داديسي", “Dadisi” 2017).

#### **Mais Khaled Al-othman:**

When Iraqi occupation broke out in Kuwait in 1990 with all its painful political events, the creativity of Mais Khaled Al-othman was sparkled. She lived through all these events and was deeply affected by them. So, she found it essential to document these events in a novel that testifies to that bleak historical event.

Al-othman is a Kuwaiti writer, a literary researcher and a novelist. She graduated from Kuwait University, Department of Media and Communication in 1999. She is a member of the Kuwaiti Writers Association and an employee of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Literature, Department of Publishing and Distribution 2000. She also

works as an editor in "Al Funun Newspaper" issued by the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters / Kuwait, then as a secretary and a managing editor. She writes many novels and short stories like *The forty's Box* (2018), *A Journey to the Secrets of the Ancient East* (2014), *Open an Arc and Close it* (2013), *He was not Found* (2011), *Fingers' Prayers* (2010), *A Dance Doctrine* (2009), *Brides of Wool* (2006), *The Sky Room* (2004), *Her Little Things* (2003), *He Is Absurd* (2001) and the novel considered here, *Tho'lol (The Wart)* (2015).

**"ثؤلؤل", "Tho'lol", "A Wart":**

The title of the novel is a typical representation of Essentialism." ثؤلؤل  
 "، "Tho'lol" is a colloquial Kuwaiti noun that refers to an undesirable wart attached to the skin, keeping and removing the wart are two unpleasant experiences. Similarly, Salwa the main female character is an unpleasant creature to her family. The novel "ثؤلؤل"، "Tho'lol"، "A Wart" tells the story of a thirteen-year-old Kuwaiti girl, Salwa, who is raped by Iraqi forces during Iraq's occupation to Kuwait. She becomes pregnant, and the family conceals this crime out of shame to the whole world, claiming that the child is the brother of the girl from her mother and father, and not her own biological son. Al-othman considers Kuwait's rape as part of Salwa's rape. "ثؤلؤل"، "Tho'lol"، "A Wart" narrates the suffering, shame, and disgrace which this girl endures despite her innocence. The novel clarifies the extent of injustice that the girl faced from society, family and everyone, which illustrates the case of some women in the East, especially in the Gulf. The novel emphasizes the blatant unfairness to women and to the environment of Arab Gulf, where both are savagely raped and abused by men. The novel is an expose of errant, even criminal, practices against women who often are the targets of such brutal rape. "ثؤلؤل"، "Tho'lol"، "A Wart" is about the innocent victim, who is condemned both by society and by her own family. In a perverse and dramatic instance

of irony, the perpetrator/villain becomes the victim, and the innocent victim, the innocent girl, becomes the villain. Al-othman's irony is pungent, satirical, and probing.

I am an invisible transparent being that leaves behind only disappointment and a question. I am a mixture of gel. I cross the paths of the world and I do not feel me! How, by God, can people pay attention to my existence? Gray I am. I am not worth anything. I understood very well that I am nothing but "a wart" that made a place on the skin of my small family, so I stuck to them intrusively and they get confused how to hide this prominent distortion from others without pain? ("ثؤلؤل"، "Tho'lol"، "A Wart" 9 translated mine)

Because the men in Salwa's family, including her father and brother, do not defend or protect her, she carries disgrace and ignominy alone, especially since pregnancy outside the bonds of marriage a particularly heinous crime. The family members greatly alter their day-to-day dealings with the raped girl. For instance, the brother, previously a close friend before the rape, no longer speaks to her. The father, for the most part, adopts the politics of avoidance and chooses to remain sad, silent, and withdrawn from his daughter. Even the grandmother, supposedly the aged embodiment of wisdom and compassion, blames her and mourns the family's bad luck and bleak future for all of them. Only the little girl entertains mixed feelings of joy, sadness and excitement for the pending new guest who will be hers only, namely, her newborn son. Her elation at birthing a child is very real, but, in this society, what will she do with him and what does it mean to be a mother in such a culture? Despite these oscillating emotions, she cannot wait to have the newborn baby. Will her emotions toward the child differ than her feelings for the baby doll (37)?

**Essentialism in Mais Al-othman's "ثؤلؤل", "Tho'lol", "A Wart":**

Essentialism, as a concept of Ecofeminism, is amply evident in the suffering, exploitation and violence against woman as well as against the environment and the degraded Kuwaiti women. We well understand this cry—"I am a rose rejected from a spring that was in its beginning blooming, then . . . faded away" (113)—which summarizes their forlorn state. The heroine is similar to plants; the rose that bloomed, then withered and was rejected from the spring, as Salwa was before the rape, a favorite daughter of the family, then was excluded, rejected and withered. The novel "ثؤلؤل", "Tho'lol", "A Wart" graphically and unashamedly explores a hidden truth about the eastern society, especially the Kuwaiti society which, by hiding behind an illusory curtain of alleged "honor," evades its responsibility. Instead of defending and protecting women, it blames and degrades them ("داديسى", "Dadisi"). Al-othman exemplify this shocking failure through a clandestine agreement which is carried out by members of Salwa's family, even though it was the family's daughter who was raped and victimized by the occupying Iraqi soldier during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Through the poignant dialogues and moving confessions, which Salwa reveals to her blond doll and her therapist, Al-othman autobiographically - and convincingly - reveals many reprehensible secrets in the Kuwaiti society. The novel, in effect, reveals the deceit and falsehood of which some women in the East are victims, during wars, and nevertheless continue to engage and bequeath to their innocent children. "You, my sin that have committed me and insisted to grow up before me to take care of you with strange charm, tell me how can I believe what my grandmother 'Nasra' said that sadness starts big and then gets smaller" ("ثؤلؤل", "Tho'lol", "A Wart" 10).

The primary manifestation of Essentialism in the novel appears in the

clever and sustained similarity between women and the environment—specifically, in the suffering of women and the suffering of the environment. This environment is represented by animals, plants and inanimates. Al-othman types many nuanced analogies between Salwa's suffering and that of the environment around her: "The red color emptied from my crayons, as the blood dried up in my veins when the soldiers caught us on a night we were spending with the confused radio in Kuwait as a lost entity engulfed in fatigue" (17). Here Salwa looks like an inanimate crayon and her blood is like the red color of the crayon.

No scene, however, compares to the rape situation which Salwa, the victim's heroine, suffers. At the time Kuwait was usurped by Iraq, the heroine Salwa was raped by a soldier of the Iraqi occupation. Both nature and women were exposed to violence via the rape of Salwa as well as the rape of Kuwaiti land.: "He hurt my femininity very much, I woke up from his weight, his tantalizing hurt, I was buried in my anger, my sweetness, my loud shout, and my nose smelled a very bad smell, and then I disappeared in an abnormal dream.. And when I woke up I was surrounded by faces I knew and could not bear explanation" (18).

Salwa remembers every bad moment she has gone through especially the rape and it becomes an obsession for her dreams; the smell, her family's failure to protect her and their fear and weakness, for which she pays a most exacting price. Even during the time she practices her daily activities and hobbies, she remembers that tormenting trauma and she comments: "I returned to painting, silently and with a mind beyond its age to think. The flag of Kuwait is incomplete; the red color has been lost from the container of pots, from my soul and from... my monthly ritual" (19)! The writer uses the inanimate element of nature, as Salwa compares her suffering and persecution to the flag of Kuwait, from

which the red color disappears as it disappears from her female life due to pregnancy. She feels shame for that for which she is not responsible: “The ‘stranger’s kid’ kicks me and I’m ashamed to tell my mom” (19). Predictably, she suffers psychological duress, emotional trauma, and feelings of extreme betrayal and confusion because of the rape, in the same way that the larger homeland, the besieged nation of Kuwait, suffered during the Iraqi occupation: “I got lost between two crazy obsessions, I am afraid of my fetus and I am worried about it, what confusion is this! I drowned my angry silence at them, lost in my anxiety. I grew up against my will and my choice in circumstances that threw their ugliness at the heart of the country”. The betrayal morphs into humiliation. So what does Salwa do when she is responsible for offering protection, defense, comfort, moral and psychological support, despite her family despises and degrades her, heaping unbearable guilt and shame on her: “My existence was the gloomy face that every one of my family resented from looking at, because it was their reality”(21).

After rape, Salwa suffers from loathes like her country during occupation. Everyone in the family, particularly the old grandmother who used to tease them since they were young, despises her. Finding no peace about the matter, the grandmother belittles her and makes fun of the situation. She loathes Salwa even when Salwa asks her about pregnancy, since she is an experienced woman who gave birth to six children before, but the grandmother, cold and heartless, never replies to escape resentment that might injure them all. Salwa’s self-pity, pronounced inferiority and intense self-loathing are, within the context of this cruel society, easily understandable:

I was a child who, quickly, got dressed in women’s clothes, and even while falling! How could I play with the blonde dolls while the stranger’s son

kicks me and someone else alerts me? Adult against my will, stupid... outcast in a way I don’t understand, so how can they hold me responsible for all that happened, while they were absent/vanished from the most oppressive and tiring moment, and at the same time they noticed my/ their misfortune?(23)

The writer, through a sustained metaphor, brilliantly compares Salwa’s suffering to the country’s occupation which displays Essentialism. Sometimes the reader feels that the country, because of the occupation, suffers every bit as much as Salwa. This owes to the author’s skillful conscious artistry. The point of Essentialism, moreover, is also accentuated throughout. The citizens are filled with sense of mournful loss—loss of homeland, loss of dignity, and even loss of future: “We lost ourselves, our homeland and all what it includes”. Another example of Essentialism is when the pessimistic character, Grandma Nasra, makes fun of stockpiling so much food comparing Kuwaiti people to food: “Who do you store all this for? We will die and the food will remain” (24)! The victim’s suffering reaches its maximum when her soul is attached to the offender, as happened to Salwa: “..my eyes cling to the window, and I wince every time a green shadow appears, and the pain and the smell leaks into my nose, I shed a lot of tears, and I rise from inside, until no one notices me anymore” (25). The family, abandons Salwa and even wishes for her death as a way of getting rid of the shame imposed on her for a sin she never committed: “They wish for my fall to get rid of the sin they left, and to prove the day I faced my fate alone, confused, and absent from the fear of the military” (25). Even her close brother, with whom she used to play when young, distances himself from her completely, blaming her for the shame that befalls the family, even though, ironically, it was caused by his and his family’s abandonment of her at time of the rape.

Salwa feels deeply oppressed: "Why did the great catastrophe split apart, leaving behind a catastrophe that extends and a calamity that sewed to my size" (28)? Salwa declares that her soul, like Kuwait's, is destroyed. She asks the searing question about the importance of place and its integral relationship to her life-defining trauma: "Where will I give birth to you ... a product of the ruin of soul, body... and homeland?" (30). That rhetorical question is far-reaching in its implication, penetrating in its philosophic and psychological depth, and absolutely heart-wrenching in the way it makes the reader dramatically witness this shocking inhumanity to man.

Kuwait was being looted every day and its hospitals were robbed of everything. Kuwaiti people were even afraid to walk outside. Streets, as a result, emptied, and Salwa was forced to stay home to hide her pregnancy. The mother starts to act as though pregnant to convince the neighbors that she is going to have a baby, but the cunning grandmother berated her with malicious words: "Who are you deceiving? .. And who will believe your lies"(31)?

Despite Salwa's family, who preferred not to leave their country during occupation out of patriotism, the novel also depicts those individuals who prefer the honor of individual female family members over that of their nation. These citizens flee before the invasion, thereby shaming those who remain to defending their land. An example is Salwa's neighbor and friend Sahar who escapes with her family: "Sahar ran away with her family, who feared for her femininity from violation. While my father loved his homeland/ our homeland, and we stuck to its soil. But they let me down with their silence when the stranger trampled on my wound. But later on, they blamed on me" (32).

Salwa suffered psychologically and spiritually as nature suffered in the usurped Kuwait. Salwa eventually comes to feel that life around her has stopped because she is so sad about what had happened to her and to

the country. Even nature, correspondingly, was also saddened by Salwa's tragedy: "The sky of my homeland is silent" (33). Everyone abandoned her, even her mother, Najeba, did not pay attention to her fears but runs away from them. Salwa, in short, finds no one who reassures her and relieves her horror. She cannot even go to a health center to ask for help because she is afraid of revealing the secret and also because the health center was destroyed by the occupation and looting. She decided to know about the time of giving birth to her child when she feels pains.

Many fears overcome Salwa; she is afraid of death so that people will discover a thirteen-year-old pregnant corpse: "Nothing escapes the scandal, not even death" (43). Salwa endures an emotional blend of fear, depression, sadness, agony, and even longing: "Why then, whenever I close my eyes to sleep, the face of the soldier who broke my crystal appears to me? Why is it that every time I see his face in the blackness of my eyes, I feel a strange longing" (45)?! Matters reached their peak as the date of birth approaches and the fetus grows inside her. The family, during these anxious weeks, increases its persecution, dishing out abuse, abhorrence, humiliation and scorn: "she's all like her mother, imperfect and ugly. She twisted her mouth with disgust."(49)

However, Al-othman compared between the death of the cunning grandmother, who used to hurt Salwa making fun of her pregnancy, to the good cheerful change in the weather and the end of darkness: "The day our grandmother left us is an exceptional day in which nature allied itself with the fires, so the wind changed its direction, and we saw light!"(53)

The family traveled to Egypt for Salwa to give birth to the new child, give it the name of Salwa's father and come back to Kuwait. The writer makes parallel between the destruction of Salwa and that of Kuwait. Salwa went to Egypt leaving Kuwait destroyed just like herself: "flee from

looking at the desolate details of a torn Kuwait like a prey which has been finished eaten by a group of hungry hyenas, Kuwait is broken, wrecked, empty, cold, dirty...it lost its first soul, its hot sun and its smell that only those who mix with it know it" (55). Salwa's family was afraid not to be able to complete the lie and the secret may be revealed: "They were hiding from cowardice, love, shame, fatigue, or anticipation, this time" (57). In the most painful time, during the childbirth process, Al-othman resembles Salwa to a tree trunk, the part of nature that carries the whole plant, bears and is responsible for its life, both Salwa and the tree trunk are suffering human pain, which represents Essentialism: "I woke up like a tree trunk lying on the beach dry and thirsty. And the sound of the beach combing my ear with its constant whistling" (57).

Al-othman compares between the end of the Iraqi occupation to Kuwait and the birth of the baby. Salwa starts to feel happy after the birth of the new baby, just as Kuwait becomes liberated. When she sees his eyes and smile she was so happy: "I loved your unexpected smile that spread doses of joy in my rusted soul since my crystal was broken (I was raped) and everyone became my enemy!"(61) Salwa loved the baby so much and hopes that it will be the mercy of God to her. Although her mother and grandmother gave her herbs and mixtures to kill the fetus, it was born healthy and beautiful. It was God's will for Salwa to have a baby and enjoy being a mother. Her family called the baby "Births of the invasion". Here ecofeminism is clear as despising the innocent baby, who is not responsible for its birth, insulting it just like they do with women which are one of the features of ecofeminism; oppressing women, children and the other. Salwa got hurt and lost her smile as a reaction to these despising words to her child.

Salwa's friend Sahar, who ran away with her family to escape war, returns to Kuwait, yet their passions towards each other

become quite different: "If you meet again with loved ones who have been destroyed by wars, killings, and pains varying between here and there. If you are a refugee, it is no doubt a deep wound that may turn you into a hidden monster erupts for no reason."(70) Despite being a refugee in another country, Sahar was saved from rape by the occupation's soldiers. Both Sahar and Salwa are oppressed by men but Salwa's experience destroys her soul, psychologically exhausts her and changes her into an insecure identity. The writer compares between Salwa and Sahar as two different models of female identities under severe experience of wars. One becomes a refugee and the other is raped. This comparison shows clearly the spiritual and psychological suffering of women in this culture:

"Because Sahar, in our first strange meeting, after the disaster, with every word she spoke, every laugh emanating from a relaxed heart protected from the fear of the military, the prohibition of roaming, searches, confiscation, the anxiety of the green color in clothes, the strange accent, the smell of sweat, the scarcity of water, complete helplessness, cold, emptiness, submission, and the lack of clarity of the coming. Deprivation, blackness, and idleness, though, were pouring out of my soul ...I prayed God with warm pleading that she would be absent from me, forever!"(70)

The above quotation displays two different images of women who live in a safe and secure country, compared to women who live in war and whose personality and identity were infiltrated and took root in her psyche and memory, leaving wounds and scars that will never vanish within her. Even the male figure that symbolizes moderation, but rather love towards Salwa, her brother, Salem, turns after that incident into a mere male who oppresses a woman and punishes her for

what she did not commit who does not talk to her since then.

Salwa's brother and father represent a further type of male oppression against her. For example, Salem her brother though he is eighteen years old, he still couldn't accept that shameful day: "Salem ... did not get past the curse of that night, that helpless silence, inability and deep fear, nor the result that produced Jaber and turned me into an unpleasant wart." (72). He is angry and neither agree with the secret solution of changing the child's parents nor does he accept the brother imposed on him. He has a separate plan; he runs away from the country and from the hidden shame. This terrible emotional oppression from her only and intimate brother changes Salwa's appearance into a pale sad old little girl to the extent that the social teacher notices her out of 30 students: "My sadness that made the social teacher wanders with her eyes among 30 students to pass them and ask me specifically: 'Salwa, do you have a prisoner or a martyr'." (77)? The teacher asks her to bring her father to ask him about the pale sad appearance of Salwa. That is why Salwa decides to behave like a happy girl in order to escape such situation again, claiming unreal feelings to deceive her teachers, classmates, and the whole society, to avoid repeating such a situation again. The most painful time for Salwa, more than the raping day, was when she was asked in the Arabic comprehension test to write a topic about the experience of the brutal Iraqi occupation to Kuwait, in no more than three pages.

I lost the ability to breathe, then to read, then to understand...my soul darkened ... the eyes of the students and teachers cheered me with great disapproval ... I sway between their hands, unable to control my body, all voices reproaching me and calming my sudden madness that descended mercilessly, and like a madwoman I doubled down on I was saying with a dry mouth: "In no more than three

pages!!... So, will the hurt heal!?" (81-82)

Salwa's suffering escalates when she imagines a conversation between her brother, Salem, and herself because she can't talk to him in reality, as she used to do before the rape. She is completely deprived of the intimacy that was between her and Salem. She lost her brother's connection, that is why she imagines it. She thinks that Salem asks her mother why Salwa chose to specialize in libraries and she imagines the answer saying that she takes refuge in the library. She sometimes claims that she is researching deeply:

Because I am running away from all of you towards books ... to know who are more miserable than me. I read a history, crowded with wonders that I believe alone...I... move between knowledge and get lost in worlds I didn't know, recount the details to the young Jaber when he can't sleep, so he rests full of stories, is it sweeter than books? At least, a gentle and enjoyable escape. As for your escaping, Salem, it has no meaning except for hiding. ! (90-91)

Another example of Essentialism is illustrated when one of her family members denies the child's origin calling him not a Kuwaiti child. Then Salwa becomes like a lioness protecting her children and runs to the relatives who call him so. She resembles female animals who defend their children shouting: "This is my little one who struggled to come to life from the heart of the battle when you were wrapping your mothers' cloaks in exile, you, half-imals! Sleep peacefully in the deception. Otherwise, I open a flood of facts that will deeply hurt you all well" (92)!

As for the mother, Najiba, another type of an oppressed women during war time, she used to be sad, helpless and passive since the raping accident. She finds a comfortable social trick, through sharing with all the sad situations. She escapes to participate in all the ceremonies and sad

occasions in her life and in the lives of other relatives, neighbors and acquaintances to find comfort and an appropriate opportunity to weep for the condition of her family after the rape of Salwa. "She puts on her cloak and empties her groans, tears, so she comes back with cool and too calm eyes." (94) Salwa decides to protect herself. She chooses to cure the deforms through going to a psychiatrist: "...I needed a human bandage to contain me, wrap my head and protect it from its terrible chaos" (96). Salwa asks a critical question about her identity and the identity of women during war. She wonders about their situation after the physical assault against them and compares between raped women after war and Kuwait's fake celebration. She even claims that their spiritual and psychological suffering is deeper than martyrs, victims and captives. She declares forged happiness and celebration of the country after war:

What kind of a girl I am ...What does it mean that we become a sacrifice to surrender the other? For, the martyr died and was honored; the captive was missed and remembered. So, what about me? Under what classifications can I run, under my experience, my catastrophe and my hurt? And the country? An authority and people, what do they celebrate for, every time February returns colorful with flags and warm sun? Are they singing to celebrate assaulting and violating me?(99)

Al-othman is attacking the false politics and politicians when Salwa is infuriated during Kuwait celebration after war. Salwa questions her belonging to Kuwait. The whole experience fractured her Kuwaiti identity. She remembers the raping and calls this a false celebration, victory or happiness. She accuses politicians, family and the whole society of her curse. She blames them for forcing her to grow to become a mother and a sister like "a gelatinous mass" which is pulled from every side to accept, by force,

what life presents to her. Her psychological suffering appears in questioning her mother one day "when I die, will Jaber grieve for me as a deserving mother? Or will I be buried with and inside the secret, and that gloomy dark cloud disappears clearing your sky?!" (103). The impact of Salwa's search for identity intensifies when the psychiatrist asks Salwa where she saw herself at that time, she replies recounting herself "like a different model of a woman from different age each time, a mixture of the universe women, marked by torment, I live a quarter of a life, hanging by a very thin thread, the window is very wide, and earth stretches underneath" (107). She cannot resolve her Kuwaiti identity anymore. She senses no protection or belonging to any place in the world. She turns her identity from belonging to the small Kuwait to the wide Globe.

However, Salwa's only settlement is her deep love to Jaber and her yawning sorrow against him, the thing that reflects psychological suffering: "This balm boy... my son for sure, and always my brother, is the one who colored my life with happiness of the miraculous ability, and at the same time he stains my days with distant disappointment... Is there more miserable mixed feeling?" (108)

She states to her psychiatrist that she does not ignore her parents, yet they are considered absent as they chose silence and abandonment since the day of raping: "For him (Salwa's father), death and treachery did not start from a fighting between two brothers! Rather, it was on the day the homeland was slaughtered and his Arabism and his nationalism melted with the shaded blood." (124).

The fear of death and destruction during war is one of the points of violence against women, human, nonhuman and nature which is the main idea of Ecofeminism. Fear was multiplied with Najiba, as when the Kuwaiti Liberation War was declared in 1991, she closed the windows with heavy carpet as barricades protecting her family from breaking glass. "My mother and fear

go hand in hand". Al-othman describes her point of view about the whole conspiracy on the mouth of Salwa: "We were 'servants of the first enemy', then 'traitorous conspirators', then 'devoid of Arabism', just because we opened our borders to the world and became a crossing road to Iraq in order to restore its purity and eradicate its rotten head" (135). Salwa even pitied Jaber, her son-brother, for being in the same experience as hers when she was in his age: "During that time, I contemplated Jaber for a long time and he was forced – with us – to experience a great political force when he was in my age. Do we bequeath to our children, without control, the authority of all our burdens, dragging them to the first circle, which left its fateful marks on us?"(136). Salwa's tragedy and suffering amplified when she envies her dead grandmother, Nasra, and wishes to be in her place, to escape from the expected ravages of wars, either chemical or biological, and their disasters on them as well as on Kuwait:

Drenched in fear - ... we keep imagining various changing forms of our possible deaths, By bombing, by missiles, by gases that irritate nerves, Burning or cracking under piles of cement, alone among the rubble and with so much pain until the end...we, women, are exempted from our jobs for a whole week, perhaps, in order to be assured of a sheltered death among our families if our homes collapsed and we became pieces. (137-38)

One of Salwa's devastating emotional oppression was at that night when her mother was unable to sympathize with Jaber, pretending to be his claimed mother, or with true tenderness as his genuine grandmother when Jaber gave her his present she couldn't give him true love: "I closed my eyes for a moment. Then I opened them to see her embracing Jaber with half tenderness" (142).

One of the most cynical situations is when Jaber asked his father/grandfather to tell him about Iraqi war against Kuwait. What

should he tell him? That he himself is a result of this war. Adel, the father, decides to tell him about Kuwait only during this war not about the family: "On the second of August, Kuwait disappeared from the map, and we no longer had an international presence, despite the world's recognition of us. The invasion was all anxiety, anticipation, killing and martyrs, frightening insecurity, and all this was enough for high tension for seven months, my son..."(144). Kuwait vanished from the map just like the identity of Salwa, as real Jaber's mother, was missed from the world. But Salwa wished to tell him the truth, to tell him that they were here in the house raping her. That they were reality: "They were a big bitter truth, a fact that will not be missed as long as you and I are near!" and that Jaber himself was "one of the afflictions of the oppression that was at war" (147). In the following passage, Al-othman refers to another Essentialist feature; the similarity between women and their places. Salwa and her friend Sahar are similar to their houses, old and pale and as if every girl is getting old and usurped like her own house:

All marks left on her by the hateful spiritual transformations towards others. A large part of her house that resides in my memory... Can you believe that she smells the same?! ... We really look like our homes. My visiting friend told me, Salwa, you look like your apartment, but you are all of it! I laughed that day at the observation, but when I was alone with myself, I was sure that it was true... At least, this intermittent part of my father's house does not look like theirs; its only details belong to me.(148)

During her studies, something great things happen to Salwa which brings her back to life, as she is searching for what is lost from her "in the blackness of a distant night". She is no longer afraid of anything or anyone. She becomes stronger: "I became a visible thing after being the conscience that

creatures talk about a lot but they don't use in their expressions. I was a wart, an additional part on their skin, but it stuck to them against their will. Piercing the ugliness they see alone" (151).

Salwa overcomes her crisis through reading and between hundreds of books in which she reconciles with herself. Reading about other's lives heals her insecurity: "I prepare myself for hidden voices that welcome me, and I believe that they are the voices of writers, authors, poets and thinkers, as they know exactly how much I love them and what they produce" (110). Salwa also resorts to psychological treatment to reunite her chattered self. She finally cures her hurts and recovers from pains and spiritual sufferings: "but when I wake up, I feel that the sun is rising in my chest, not in the sky" (152)! Finally, She asks the universal question; if other women are like her, pretending to be happy, hiding their shameful secrets inside their hearts so not to be cursed by the society for a fate they did not choose for themselves:

Who are the silent violators ... Who do you think? ... How many would you dare to confess to a strange man whom they didn't know, like you, Doctor? ...just like other societies that continue to do atrocities in secret and fall behind excuses of circumstances and revel in their heinous deed that smears with a thousand false desires for purity, to announce loudly their rejection of all up normal behaviors! Is it reasonable not to know the number of raped women who have been morally murdered since that tragedy?!(167)

Al-othman explains through the heroine the extent of the destruction caused by war and sexual assaults against Kuwait as well as against women like Salwa who is raped. She swims inwardly wracked with her shattered thoughts like a "kingdom of ruins." Had it not been for her savior and source of happiness, the psychotherapist, her condition would have deteriorated greatly:

"I would have plucked my hair on the main streets of Kuwait infested with the most grievous ailments and injuries of mind and soul" (175). Lastly, she is adapted to her shame and life nightmare, brighter and happier: "You are covered in light like an angel celebrating the coronation" (216). With the help of her therapist, she makes a medal of pride as an alternative to the wart that all her family disgust. Salwa copes with the wart considering it a tattoo of pride like a prize of honor as a deserving loyalist not as a victim of war:

I forgot my date of birth and my memories faded with life, I forgot crying as a child and singing as a young woman, my heart had escaped from all this and that, and melted with my own fire with a child who carried my eyes, a thief of my joy to be rebuked by memory And this tattoo is grown. It has become a brand that I am very proud of. (211)

#### **Conclusion:**

Interest, especially in literature, increased in nature. The principles of feminist writing changes radically from the demand for women's rights and equality with men to showing the similarity between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature, and the comparison between women and nature with its animal, plant and inanimate elements.

As an Arab Kuwaiti female writer, Al-othman, never separates herself socially, emotionally and psychologically from the war-made environment, as Ecofeminism is a literary theory surrounding the torment and suffering of women who live amidst war, as Al-othman represents and depicts this theory, to portray the devastating and degrading images of women abused in such environment.

Contemplating deeply of Al-othman's "ثؤلؤل", "Tho'lol", "A Wart", one notices the ethical oppression in Kuwaiti society during Iraqi war. Al-othman focuses on the effects of war on women, represented by Salwa and her family, as well as on Kuwait.

The study reflects one of the ecofeminist concept Essentialism, in the common oppression of women and the environment, linking the suffering of women to the destruction of the environment, the connection between the violence and exploitation of women and their bodies and the violence and exploitation of the environment. Al-othman compares between the persecution of men against Kuwaiti women as well as against Kuwait. She also compares between the suffering of Kuwaiti women and the suffering of Kuwait during the Iraqi occupation to Kuwait. Both are similarly persecuted, suffer from male oppression and violation, usurped and traumatized.

Al-othman identifies symbolic elements of nature such as; the Kuwaiti flag, which red color disappears with the monthly ritual that leaves Salwa after her pregnancy, the withered rose as Salwa withers after her rape, the red crayon, which red color disappears after the monthly ritual leaves Salwa and Kuwait's land which is violated along with Salwa's rape during the occupation.

The study concludes that there is double oppression in Kuwaiti patriarchal societies, on women during wars as well as on environment and when Kuwait was liberated from the Iraqi occupation of its land, women were liberated from oppression and sexual violence. Salwa suffers psychologically and resorts to psychiatrist to be able to overcome what she goes through during wars. She changes her weak passive personality into independent powerful one to be able to defend her son and herself against any sort of oppression or persecution. She finds an outlet and a way out for her life and her problems in reading and living with books, which are her first and last love.

The study deals with the research questions that women differ in the environment of war from the environment of peace, and they differ in their principles, morals, personal and psychological suffering, the problems they face as women,

and feminist characteristics in each of the two environments. The research answers it in the light of the study of Al-othman's "ثؤلؤل", "Tho'lol", "A Wart", which talks about the suffering of a girl who was raped by an Iraqi soldier during Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

It was shown by evidence that Salwa, as a symbol of the Gulf woman during the war, was subjected to a great shock that led to her isolation and separation from her large family, Kuwait, and her small family, which is her family, which led to changing her affiliation to every oppressed woman anywhere in the world in general, and her identity changed to isolation and confinement with books, library, fiction and history. She also tried to adapt by deciding to be proud of her ostracized self and to flaunt her oppressed patriotism and her former existence as a wart in the body of the homeland, to the slogan of an honorary and appreciation award for her for her individual heroism and her steadfastness alone during and after the war in front of her family and society and her independence in herself and her son-brother who made him a belonging home of love. To reach this, Salwa made a strong decision to go through psychological treatment to recover from the shock after the trauma she faced out of rape, fear, war and its scourge.

Salwa recovered from feelings of inferiority, nihilism, defeatism, rejection, resistance, and shame that afflicted her after the rape, and she created a new identity that is reconciled with all circumstances, strong, independent and happy. And about her son's right to get the identity of his country and to confront her relatives with their mistakes, their shame, who would bear and inherit shame on her. The story ends with a sign of optimism and hope for the future of Kuwait and the future of Salwa as well, predicting a love between her and the psychiatrist, who rescued her from previous crisis and guided her to correct the past underlying conditions and to the path of a happy future.

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