



IRAQI  
Academic Scientific Journals



العراقية  
المجلات الأكاديمية العلمية



ISSN: 2663-9033 (Online) | ISSN: 2616-6224 (Print)

**Journal of Language Studies**

Contents available at: <https://jls.tu.edu.iq/index.php/JLS>

## Examining the Ecofeminist Concepts of Power and Resilience in Diane Wilson's *The Seed Keeper*

Sahar Ali Hamdi \*

University of Tikrit\College of Education for Women

[sahar.ali23@st.tu.edu.iq](mailto:sahar.ali23@st.tu.edu.iq)

&

Assist Prof. Ahmad Khalid Hassoon

University of Tikrit\College of Education for Women

[ahmadartstr@tu.edu.iq](mailto:ahmadartstr@tu.edu.iq)

Received: 1/ 10 / 2024, Accepted: 20/1 /2025, Online Published: 25 /2/ 2025

### Abstract

This paper tries to examine the ecofeminism theory and the principles of dystopian fiction in Diane Wilson's *The Seed Keeper* (2021). It goes to study the interconnection between the suppression of women and the environment, concentrating on the oppression of women and the exploitation of nature. It aims at discovering the ecofeminist concepts of power and resilience describing the dualistic hierarchies addressing for a social shift towards sympathetic values that respect both women and the environment. It attempts to explain how *The Seed Keeper* depicts the Dakota women and their profound connection to the land, emphasizing the traditional practices of seed-keeping and cultural resilience. It also describes the intersectionality by showing the compounded oppression confronted by Indigenous women. It portrays the resistance and empowering women throughout the protagonists' journey of connecting with the land and reclaiming their heritage.

\* Corresponding Author: Sahar Ali Hamdi, Email: [sahar.ali23@st.tu.edu.iq](mailto:sahar.ali23@st.tu.edu.iq)

Affiliation: University of Tikrit-Iraq

© This is an open access article under the CC by licenses <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>



**Keywords:** Ecofeminism / Diane Wilson/ Dystopian fiction/ Intersectionality/ oppression / power/ Resilience / The Seed Keeper

## دراسة مواضيع الصمود والقوة من منظور النسوية البيئية في رواية "حارسة البذور" للكاتبة ديان ويلسون

سهر علي حمدي

جامعة تكريت/ كلية التربية للبنات/ قسم اللغة الانكليزية

و

أ.م. احمد خالد حسون

جامعة تكريت/ كلية التربية للبنات/ قسم اللغة الانكليزية

### المستخلص

يحاول هذا البحث استكشاف التحليل النقدي لنظرية النسوية البيئية ومبادئ أدب العالم البائس في رواية "حافظ البذور" (2021) للروائية ديان ويلسون. تسعى الدراسة الى فهم الترابط بين قهر النساء والبيئة، مع التركيز على قمع النساء، واستغلال الطبيعة، والهياكل الأبوية والرأسمالية. تهدف إلى وصف المواضيع النسوية البيئية مثل الصمود والقوة، ونقد التسلسل الهرمي الثنائي، داعية إلى التحول الاجتماعي نحو قيم رحيمة تحترم كل من النساء والبيئة. تسعى الورقة إلى توضيح كيف تصور "حافظ البذور" نساء الداكوتا وارتباطهن العميق بالأرض، مع تسليط الضوء على الممارسات التقليدية للحفاظ على البذور، والصمود الثقافي، ورعاية البيئة. كما تتناول التداخل بين القضايا من خلال الكشف عن الاضطهاد المعقد الذي تواجهه النساء ، وتصف المقاومة وتمكين المرأة من خلال رحلة البطولة لاستعادة تراثها وإعادة الاتصال بالأرض.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** النسوية البيئية / أدب العالم البائس / ديان ويلسون / حافظ البذور / التداخل بين القضايا / الصمود / القوة / الاضطهاد

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The ideology of ecofeminism can be described as a theory that its basic premise “authorizes the oppressions such as those based on race, class, gender, sexuality, physical abilities, and species is the same ideology which sanctions the oppression of nature” (Gaard, 1998, p.1). It examines “the relationships and connections that exist between women and the natural world” (Marx, 64). It is about protecting nature, including animals, land, water, woods, and women who are abused or neglected (d'Eaubonne, 1974). It also includes protecting children, the poor, and women who are abused or mistreated. Eco-feminists criticize the subjugation and mistreatment of both women and natural resources. It emphasizes the end of all forms of oppression and exploitation. The goal of ecofeminism is to create a society that is defined by compassionate values instead of one that is defined by power over women and the environment. Ecofeminism proposes a replacement for every aspect of the masculine system of control and oppression through an ethics of care, a morality based on feminine parts of ethics, and an emphasis for caring for all species regardless of gender, race, or color.

One of the most important concepts of ecofeminism is dualism. The dualistic hierarchical oppositions, such as: heaven/ earth, mind/ body, male/ female, human/ animal, spirit/ matter, culture nature, and white/ non-white — are used by patriarchal systems to explain their domination (Lahar, 1996). According to ecofeminism, all dualisms and binary oppositional forms must be dismantled because, as long as any dualisms exist and function as essential parts of societal arrangements, they will perpetuate oppression. These dualisms are not only socially constructed, but also contribute to the exploitation of both women and nature. One task of ecofeminists has been to expose these dualisms and the ways in which feminizing nature and naturalizing women has served as justification for the domination of women and the earth (Gaard, 1993). Ecofeminism challenges the dualistic view that separates people from nature, advocating for a more comprehensive view that recognizes the connection between people and nature (Mellor, 1994). It attempts to make social change to take apart the dualistic hierarchies.

There is a great connection between the subjugation of women to the domination of nature. In her book, *“The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution”*, Carolyn Merchant (1980) introduces the notion of the “domination of nature” as a guiding principle (p.172). There is a connection between the degradation of the environment and social values. Ecofeminism includes all the kinds of social domination because the domination of sex, race, and class and the domination of nature are mutually reinforcing, extending this analysis to the dominance of nature present in general Western society (Kings, 2017). The dominance of woman was the first kind of domination in human society, and it was the source from which all other hierarchies-of rank, class, and political power-sprung.

In ecofeminism, it is necessary to recognize the interdependence between women and nature by understanding the patriarchal dominance. Within the framework of patriarchal society's rule over women and the natural world, ecofeminism seeks to understand the connection between women and nature in order to oppose the oppression. Heidi Hutner (2011), “when we poison the Earth, we are poisoned”, and this stems from a

long tradition of patriarchal dominance in which the powerful are entitled to control, exploit, and dominate the weak (P.67). Ecofeminism aims at eliminating all forms of oppression, based on the belief that if one wants to free women or any other oppressed group, one must free nature. Its theoretical foundation is an identity that is interconnected with all life, primarily defined by women. Ecofeminism challenges all forms of dominance. The objective is not only to change the individuals in control, but to fundamentally transform the whole framework of power.

By studying Diane Wilson's *The Seed Keeper* in a critical framework of ecofeminism, there is a gap in understanding the intersections of environmental and gender issues and indigenous narratives. This study seeks to fill this gap by exploring the ecofeminist themes of resilience and power in *The Seed Keeper*, aiming to present a deeper recognition of how these themes are woven into the narrative and what they reveal about the broader socio-political and ecological challenges confronted by indigenous societies. This problem statement is identified from the existing gap in the research which can be guided by addressing the following problems:

- Examining the intersection of gender and ecology, attempting to depict the interconnectedness of women's experiences and environmental issues
- Exposing the challenges arise in analyzing these intersections by illustrating the resilience of Indigenous women in the face of ecological destruction and cultural erasure.
- Explore the power dynamics between patriarchal structures and the environment, and the implications for environmental justice.

Research Aims and Objectives:

1. Identifying the critical analysis of *The Seed Keeper* that illustrate the themes of resilience and power according to ecofeminist theory.
2. Investigating the connection between women and nature, highlighting how this bond offers the characters' ability to resist and survive.
3. Explore the significance of indigenous traditions in shaping the resilience and power of the characters, particularly in the face of environmental and cultural challenges.
4. Contextualize Wilson's depiction of environmental struggles, focusing on how the novel addresses the intersectional exploitation of women and nature.

To accomplish this goal, the current research aims to:

1. To analyze the representation of resilience and power in the female characters of *The Seed Keeper* within an ecofeminist framework.
2. To explore the connection between women and nature in *The Seed Keeper*, focusing on how this relationship contributes to the characters' resilience and empowerment.
3. To examine the role of indigenous knowledge and practices in fostering resilience and power among the characters in *The Seed Keeper*.

4. To assess how Wilson's portrayal of ecological degradation and cultural loss reflects broader ecofeminist concerns about the exploitation of both women and the environment.

## **2. DIANE WILSON'S *The Seed Keeper***

Diane Wilson is an American environmental activist and novelist. She was born in Texas, in the United States of America, on October 17, 1948. She has published many award-winning books and essays. Her first memoir, entitled, "Spirit Car: Journey to a Dakota Past" in 2006, won a Minnesota Book Award and was selected for the 2012 One Minneapolis One Read program. Wilson's *The Seed Keeper* (2021), (Milkweed Editions) received the 2022 Minnesota Book Award for Fiction. Her book entitled "Where We Come From", co-written with John Coy, Sun Yung Shin, and Shannon Gibney, was released in October 2022. She uses her own actual life to show the social and political issues and how deeply ancestors connected with the land and the natural world. She devoted her writings to reflecting the language and indigenous traditions of the Native American Territory named Dakota. In her writings, she examines the Native American history, culture, and identity.

*The Seed Keeper* is a novel published in 2021 by Milkweed Editions, which won the Fiction Category of the 2022 Minnesota Book Award (Wilson, 2021). In this novel, Wilson writes about the heritage and powerful warnings for people living in those environments. The title of this novel gives a significant hint, since it refers to these women who sewed seeds into the ends of their skirts and hid extra seeds in their new homes to plant crops. Wilson was inspired by their courage and her love of life-giving seeds, which led her to write *The Seed Keeper*. This novel explores the interwoven lives of many generations of Dakota women, with a focus on themes of displacement, cultural history, and their deep connection to the land via the practice of seed-keeping (Wilson, 2021). It leads to understand the complex nature and abundance of Dakota history and cultural identity. Wilson's life is reflected in her own devotion to life-giving seeds. Wilson's inspiration for the novel came from brave women who dedicated their lives to preserving seeds, mirroring her own passion for seeds and their significance. It explores Dakota women's traditions and history across generations, emphasizing the importance of seeds and their connection to life. This novel explores the profound connection between Dakota women and their land and plants. Additionally, it possesses a profound comprehension and admiration for the characters in the novel, especially the strong and tough women they portray. Her work is beyond ordinary storytelling; it enlightens and motivates individuals to actively engage in their communities, fostering a collective appreciation and comprehension of their cultural heritage.

*The Seed Keeper* tells the story of the protagonist named Rosalie Iron Wing, an indigenous woman who was raised in the woods of Minnesota, acquiring knowledge of her father's traditions and the seeds that had significant cultural value. After the death of her father, Rosalie undergoes a significant change in her living situation. She moves to live with a foster family, resulting in the loss of her connection with her indigenous culture and the land. In adulthood, Rosalie marries a non-Native man named John and relocates to his family farm, ironically, on land that her ancestors previously owned. She faces challenges related to her identity and position in her family and the larger society. The story includes Rosalie's ancestors' experiences from the 1860s, illustrating how these

women battled against colonialism and cultural loss to save their way of life and their seeds for future generations. In the end, Rosalie starts to reconnect with her Dakota roots again, carrying on the traditions of her family and getting back in touch with the land. Rosalie's promise to keep her family's seed tradition alive for future generations is a sign of rebirth and hope at the end of the novel. It represents a return to one's identity and cultural continuity. Through the character of Rosalie, Wilson weaves a narrative that reflects her own values and beliefs about the importance of preserving indigenous wisdom and traditions.

The genre of *The Seed Keeper* is classified as dystopian novel. This genre focuses on the specific and broader regulation of individuals and society. Additionally, it demonstrates the widespread impact of these governments on all aspects of human life (Virtanen, 2012). On the other hand, a dystopia emphasizes the uniqueness of each person and explores the interpersonal relationships that reveal the inner world of its characters. The dystopian genre gives rise to the author's and protagonist's awareness, which typically surpasses the criteria that utopia must fulfill (Zhurkova and Khomutnikova 2019). Dystopian literature explores the environmental concerns related to industrial practices. The occurrence of these chemicals in rivers raises concerns over the damage to the environment caused by pollution. In the novel, the theme of dystopia is present in the following quotation:

"I think what Ms. Makespeace was trying to ask was if you can trust a chemical company to sell you seeds. Mangenta manufactured Agent Orange during the Vietnam War, and now they're buying up the patent rights to our seeds. What about all the farmers and migrant workers who are exposed to these chemicals every day? What happens to our rivers from the runoff?" (Wilson, 2021, p.222). The speaker expresses confidence in the honesty of a chemical company, Mangenta, which raises doubts about its ethical practices. The mention of Agent Orange, a harmful chemical used during the Vietnam War, attempts to illustrate the profound environmental and agricultural issues caused by this company in the novel. In dystopian literature, companies frequently hold complete authority and have significant influence over governments, using their power to control both financial gains and control individuals. Mangenta's control over seed rights implies an attempt at manipulation of important resources, a theme well-explored in dystopian literature. Wilson's intention in providing a voice to nature is to convey the message that nature strongly rejects the harmful actions inflicted upon woman. In the following epigraph that opens novel, Wilson states:

"We surrendered our wildness to live in partnership with the Humans.

Because we cared for each other, the People and the Seeds survived" (Wilson, 2021, p. 2).

The partnership depicts nature and humans as a symbolic collaboration that is connected to the natural world rather than based on dominance and destruction. "We surrendered our wildness" (Wilson, 2021, p. 2). The act of surrendering demonstrates humanity's impact on nature, as untouched lands are transformed into constructed environments and controlled areas. "The People and the Seeds survived" (Wilson, 2021,

p. 2). The line here represents the mutual concern required to maintain practices and coexistence. The survival of humans is closely connected to the survival of the environment. According to Alicia Puleo (2017), the current environmental and social circumstances of the twenty-first century need the significant involvement of feminism and ecology. Women have achieved self-awareness and are actively working to overcome the long-standing obstacles that have prevented their full participation in paid employment, culture, and politics.

### **3. EXPLORING THE ECOFEMINIST ELEMENTS IN WILSON'S "Seed Keeper"**

#### **3.1. Interconnection between Women and Nature**

*The Seed Keeper* illustrates the deep connection between women and the land within the context of the Dakhóta culture. The novel frequently highlights how the characters' connection to the land is intertwined with their cultural heritage and ancestral knowledge. This is particularly exemplified in the protagonist, Rosalie Iron Wing, who learns about traditional Dakota ways of farming and seed saving from her ancestors. The seeds become a symbol of her heritage and the resilience of her people (SuperSummary, 2021, P.19).

Most women work as farmers and participate greatly in food production, which frequently demonstrates a connection between women and nature compared to men. Women's heightened vulnerability to environmental issues makes them more competent experts on these conditions, granting them a greater privilege (Warren, 1997). Rosalie, who is a foster child, seeks comfort by frequently going to the shores of the Minnesota River. She has learned from her father that Dakhóta families moved down the river from the north till it met the Mississippi and beyond, making it a key role of her cultural background. In the novel, a water connection is described by Rosalie, "a story from the north, news from a world that I had been taken from as a child. This water was my only connection to the land where I was born" (Wilson, 2021, p.50). The global conditions of colonialism and imperialism must consider how environmental components like water, land, energy, habitation, and migration interact with political or cultural elements like state, society, conflict, etc. (Rasheed & Abdullah 2023). The significance of water in Dakhóta culture is made clear by Ray's instructions on Dakhóta's origins and place names. The area, which is now referred to as the state, is named in a way that highlights water, specifically referring to water that is so clear that one can see the reflection of clouds on its surface. The author points out the significance of water by introducing Rosalie's story with this knowledge. Ecofeminism places more of an emphasis on the influence that nature has had on human history and society: "when the last glacier melted, it formed an immense lake that carved out the valley around the Mní Sota Wakpá, what is known today as the Minnesota River (Wilson, 2021, p.19). The representation of the glacier and the formation of the lake emphasizes the profound relationship with the natural environment. Ecofeminism highlights the influence of nature on human culture and history.

In the novel, There is a profound bond between the family and the land. The reliance is contingent upon the harvest, which in turn is contingent upon rainfall: "these families were not only thirsty for rain; they were hungry for a life that held a bit more ease, a lessening of the anxiety that gripped every one of them from seed planting until

the safe delivery of the harvest to the grain elevator (Wilson, 2021, p.220). The portrayal of the families as “thirsty for rain” and “hungry for a life” symbolizes their reliance on natural cycles and embodies an ecofeminist perspective on the interconnection of humans and nature. Lorentzen and Eaton (2002) asserted that: “the fact that women are most adversely affected by environmental problems makes them better qualified as experts on such conditions and therefore places them in a position of epistemological privilege” (Lorentzen and Eaton, 2002, p. 2). The novel tells “we’ve raised wheat, corn, cattle ... and somehow managed to make a decent living, despite everything that can go wrong on a farm (Wilson, 2021, p.220). This represents the connection between people and their lands and how they have been farming and taking care of nature throughout the years. As Rosalie continues to tend to her garden and save the seeds carefully, she makes the mindful choice to defend what she thinks is important rather than start a conflict with something that she finds harmful. Warren (1991) argued that women suffer the punishment for the degradation of the environment, especially when it comes to the destruction of forests. In addition, women encounter norms and taboos that are unfamiliar to men. Considering this perspective, trees, forests, and forestry, in particular, are subjects that are mostly associated with women: “seeds need soil and water and sun. I remembered the coneflower, with its bristly seed head that dries over the winter and scatters in the spring” (Wilson, 2021, p.116). This quotation reflects the respect for mother nature and plants’ valuable teachings in adapting to the changing seasons.

In this novel, Wilson describes how the characters safeguard their seeds to prevent the possibility of loss. “This was a gift from your grandmother, your Khún̄ši, who gave me these seeds when I married. You must keep them safe... Iná rewrapped the little cob and placed the pouch around my neck, where it lay heavy on my thin chest” (Wilson, 2021, p.131). The act of the mother passing down seeds during her daughter’s marriage represents the passing down of knowledge and emphasizes the significance of environmental preservation. This tradition reflects an ecofeminist perspective that highlights the interconnectedness between women and nature. Based on Yıldız Merve Öztürk (2020) opinion, culture normalizes and builds women’s identities as mothers and wives. Similarly, nature functions as a caring entity, ensuring the continued existence of life on our planet with its rich supply of resources. The natural world generates life forms and provides a wide range of resources.

### **3.2. Intersectionality and Oppression**

A dictatorial administration is characterized by the absolute authority of a single individual known as the dictator. The dictatorial dictatorship employs tactics such as fear, torture, brutality, and intimidation to shape the values of the people and establish total authority. This includes their efforts to construct a “new man to change the values of the people” (Linz, 2000, p.111). The interconnectedness of the oppression of women and the exploitation of the environment is further demonstrated by their historical association, as women and nature have long been linked (Thompson, 2017). According to Plato, the idea of the soul existing without a body and achieving ultimate enlightenment by surpassing the earthly realm and reaching higher regions excluded women from attaining this kind of enlightenment. Plato explains this concept in his work *Timaeus*, stating that if a person cannot achieve enlightenment, they will be reborn as a woman and then as an animal upon returning to Earth.



In *Seed Keeper*, the intersectionality of oppression can be found in various forms throughout the story. Wilson explores how different systems of oppression intersect and impact the characters' lives. This intersectionality is crucial for understanding the complexities of the characters' experiences and the challenges they face (Sheth and Salisbury, 2022). By focusing on the interconnected nature of oppression, the novel sheds light on the ways in which race, class, and other forms of oppression intersect and compound each other (Solnit, 2020).

In *The Seed Keeper*, following the death of her father, Rosalie was placed under the care of foster parents. In her final year of high school, she devises a strategy to free herself from the long-standing verbal mistreatment she has undergone. She saves enough money to move to the Twin Cities on her own, but her foster mother steals fifty percent of her money. Rosalie is deeply upset by the injustice, feeling as though the small spark of hope that kept her was gone completely. This highlights the societal injustices that Rosalie encounters while dealing with the foster care system, deepening her emotions of hopelessness and powerlessness.

Rosalie argues that the war had a transformative impact on everything. Her family members, known as the Iron Wings, engaged in war alongside the Dakhóta warriors and thereafter escaped to Canada by heading in the opposite direction ((SuperSummary, 2021, P.11). Upon their return in the early 1900s, they found a society that was slowing down to recover as families struggled with sorrow and loss. The Iron Wings attempted to grow crops but suffered the loss of their crop due to grasshopper infection and dry conditions. Over time, the family members died of disease, farm accidents, and the impact of World War II. In the end, Ray Iron Wing, her father, claimed himself as the only remaining member of the Iron Wing family, as he often expressed. This highlights the ecofeminism perspective and the interconnectedness between humans and the natural world. Also, it highlights the resistance of people; despite being the last one to survive, he managed to pass down his heritage and information about his culture and people, which represents a dystopian view.

Another example of oppression in the novel is the presence of Indians and their ongoing history of oppression they have experienced. A significant statement from the novel states, "People don't understand how hard it is to be Indian ... I'm talking about a way of life that demands your best every single day. Being Dakhóta means every step you take is a prayer" (Wilson, 2021, p.323). The author draws the connection between a tragic past and the present situation of people's lives, illustrating the ongoing struggle for rights and the treatment they receive as the result of historical events. Maria Mies argues that the exploitation of women and the exploitation of nature are interconnected processes that emerge from patriarchal structures (Alessandra Mezzadri, 2023). This perspective aligns with the realities of the Dakhóta community. In her book *Le Féminisme ou la Mort* (1974), Françoise d'Eaubonne argues that ecofeminism establishes a connection between the oppression and control of many oppressed groups (such as women, people of colour, children, and the poor) and the oppression and control of nature (including animals, land, water, and air). d'Eaubonne believes that the Western patriarchal society's oppression, dominance, exploitation, and colonization have directly resulted in permanent environmental degradation.

### **3.3. Resistance and Power of Women**

Women have been a prominent role in the environmental justice movement, leading grassroots initiatives to protect their land and resources not only for their communities but also for future generations (Johnson, 2022). In *The Seed Keeper*, the protagonist, Rosalie, embodies resilience and resistance. Even when Rosalie attempts to grow seeds and plants result in failures, she remains hopeful and committed to learning for the sake of the next generation. For example, Rosalie accidentally overwatered the broccoli, causing it to die, while the green beans withered from neglect. Her first gardening season was marred by setbacks—she didn't notice potato beetles in time and mistakenly uprooted a row of carrots while thinning them, which later perished despite her efforts to replant them. Yet, the season wasn't a total failure. Rosalie felt deep satisfaction when she harvested a basket of ripe tomatoes, and the beans dried successfully, yielding perfect seeds. Seeing an envelope marked "Rosalie and Edna Soup Beans 1980," she felt a connection with Edna, realizing that she had carefully saved these seeds to provide for her family and preserved them for future generations (Wilson, 2021, p.116).

Ecofeminists of the first generation concluded that the oppression of the environment and the exploitation of women were closely interconnected. At the first ecofeminist conference that was held in Amherst, Massachusetts, in 1980, feminists asserted that the oppression of women and the dominance of nature are closely linked, and environmental concerns were closely linked to feminist causes (Gaard, 1998). Patsy Hallen, a participant at the conference, proclaimed that ecofeminism mutually strengthens each other (Jenkins, 1995). Women are "the life-givers of the human species" (Roach, 2003, 40). A woman produces to feed her kids and fulfills the responsibilities of supporting the household. Therefore, women are seen as generous and caring beings who provide fertility. In this regard, Julia Kristeva (2017) expresses her opinion that raising kids is a social trend, and culture normalizes and builds women's identities as mothers and wives. Similarly, nature acts as a nurturing force, guaranteeing the continued development of life on our planet with its rich supply of resources. The rich and vast nature provides life and offers resources. The environment sustains living things by supplying food, air, and ongoing resources. Therefore, nature is referred to as Mother Nature, homeland, or Mother Earth.

Ecofeminists of the first generation argued that the exploitation of women and the degradation of the environment were deeply interconnected. At the inaugural ecofeminist conference in Amherst, Massachusetts in 1980, feminists highlighted the close relationship between women's oppression and the subjugation of nature, asserting that environmental issues were intrinsically linked to feminist causes (Gaard, 1998). Patsy Hallen, a conference participant, emphasized that ecofeminism reinforces both feminist and ecological movements (Jenkins, 1995). Women are viewed as "the life-givers of the human species" (Roach, 2003, p. 40), fulfilling vital roles in nurturing their children and managing households. As such, they are often perceived as compassionate, nurturing figures who contribute to fertility. Julia Kristeva (2017) similarly argues that motherhood is socially constructed, with culture shaping women's identities as mothers and wives. In a parallel way, nature is seen as a nurturing force, providing life through its abundant resources, sustaining all living beings with food, air, and other essentials. Thus, nature is often referred to as "Mother Nature," "homeland," or "Mother Earth."

However, women exemplify the resilience and determination to preserve the natural cycle:

That night, Iná showed me how to sew rows of seeds into our skirts, along the edge of our blankets, in the hem of Chaské's warm baby dress. My fingers trembled from cold and hunger as I sewed quick, uneven stitches along my skirt, folding the fabric over a double row of corn, seeds that were blue, rose, and cream. Wamnáheza, the corn for our traditional soup. My mother was afraid the soldiers would take everything of value left to us. She knew, too, that if the food ran out, these seeds would have to be hidden from her own people, who would be desperate to feed their children. She had to keep safe enough seeds for planting. No matter the cost ( Wilson, 2021, p.131).

The act of sewing seeds into clothes represents an important link between women's identities and the environment, illustrating the responsibility of women to protect nature. The act of hiding seeds serves as a symbol of resistance against powerful powers. The mother's concern towards the soldiers, who would take away valuable items such as seeds, reflects the historically unjust treatment of both individuals and the environment. Through the act of sewing seeds, women defend their means of survival from potential dangers. The conversation between the mother and her daughter symbolizes the sharing of cultural heritage and hopes for the future that the mother attempts to pass down across generations (SuperSummary, 2021, P.17).

Marie Blackbird, Rosali's great- grandmother, plays a significant role in the narrative, embodying the essence of resistance and the will to preserve lands and seeds. Marie's deep connection to her heritage is shown in her life, which serves as a strong example of the connection between individuals and their land. Her teachings have a significant role in safeguarding the cultural and agricultural legacy. Marie is portrayed as a lady who holds vast knowledge about the land and understands the significance of seeds, not only as a means of food but also as a crucial connection to history. Her wisdom is being passed to her family throughout difficult times; she views herself as: "I'm not an old woman yet, I wanted to reply, even if I've survived more than seventy winters. If you knew what I've seen and lived through, you would know that I'm made of iron" (Wilson, 2021, p.234).

Women play a central role in agriculture and the environment, which is also supported by the experiences of the Dakhóta women (Shiva, 2015). The significance of woman's role lies in her protection of the land and seeds. She uses old methods to safeguard the seeds and grows them in a way that ensures the passing of her knowledge to future generations. Furthermore, Marie's efforts are motivated by the sense of duty she has toward her people and her beloved land. She views herself as a keeper of the heritage and historical significance of the land. She is committed to protecting it from the influences of the modern era and industrial practices.

Rosalie's main desire is to establish a strong bond with her family and community. She desires to uncover her family's historical background rather than only focusing on its traditions and customs. Due to her father's efforts to keep her separated, she is now acquiring the skills to establish connections with individuals inside her social circle as an adult. She faced challenges, like the seeds, but now she has advisors and elders to help her in planting the seeds for her future; she says: "Thakóža, you've had no one to teach

you, not even how to be part of a family or community. You know what the grandmothers went through to save the seeds. That's how tough you have to be as an Indian woman. And as a seed keeper." (Wilson, 2021, p.352). Throughout the novel, the connection to the land is also depicted as a form of resistance and survival. The struggle of the Dakota people to protect their land and their way of life against external forces, such as government policies and corporate agriculture, is a recurring theme. This struggle is a testament to their resilience and determination to preserve their cultural identity.

## 5. CONCLUSION

*The Seed Keeper* links between the concepts of resilience and power of women into the exploration of ecofeminism framework, presenting an examination of the deep connections between women, nature, and cultural heritage. By portraying the main characters, this novel emphasizes how women's resilience and power are not only personal but also communal, rooting in the environment and the traditions passed down through generations. Wilson discusses how women play a critical role in the conservation of cultural and ecological knowledge, emphasizing that the empowerment of women is related to the health and sustainability of the environment. *This novel* presents a powerful witness as a compelling demonstration of women's lasting strength and their vital role in nurturing and protecting the land, presenting a persuasive vision of hope and resistance in the confronting the ecological and social challenges. Finally, the protagonist Rosalie reconnects with her Dakota roots, keeping indigenous tradition of her family, offering a return to her cultural continuity and identity. The novel illustrates the intertwined nature of social and environmental injustices due to the oppressions of class, race, and gender which are compounded and interconnected the challenges encountered by the characters, particularly indigenous women like Rosalie. In this respect, Rosalie embodies power and resilience in the confronting of environmental and personal challenges to reveal the role of woman in environment, the protection of the land, and sources for their communities.

## REFERENCES

- d'Eaubonne, F. (1974). *Le féminisme ou la mort*. Paris: P. Horay.
- Gaard, G. (1998). *Ecological politics*. Temple University Press.
- Hutner, Heidi. 2008. "Ecofeminism, Motherhood, and the Post-Apocalyptic Utopia in Parable of the Sower, Parable of the Talents, and Into the Forest." *Women Writing Nature: A Feminist View*, Lexington Books, pp. 67–79.
- Jenkins, M. (1995). View of the Piano and the tragedy of possession: an ecofeminist perspective. Retrieved on December 1 from <https://trumpeter.athabascau.ca/index.php/trumpet/article/view/295/436>
- Johnson, O. (2022). A Woman's Place is in the Resistance: An Ecofeminist Response to Climate Change.
- Kings, A. E. (2017). Intersectionality and the changing face of ecofeminism. *Ethics and the Environment*, 22(1), 63-87.
- Lahar, S. (1996). *Ecofeminist theory and grassroots politics*. na.
- Linz, J. J. (2000). *Totalitarian and authoritarian regimes*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

- Lorentzen, L. A., & Eaton, H. (2002). Ecofeminism: an overview. In *The Forum on Religion and Ecology at Yale* (pp. 1-2).
- Marx, K. (2012). *Encyclopaedia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite [M/CD]*. Chicago
- Mellor, M. (1994). Varieties of ecofeminism. *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 5(4), 117-125.
- Merchant, C. (1980). The death of nature: Women, ecology, and the scientific revolution.
- Mezzadri, A. (2023). Maria Mies, 1931-2023-Fighting housewifisation and reclaiming our planet. *Radical Philosophy*, 2, 111-114.
- Öztürk, Y. M. (2020). An Overview of Ecofeminism: Women, Nature and Hierarchies. *Journal of Academic Social Science Studies*, 13(81).
- Puleo, A. H. (2017). What is ecofeminism. *Quaderns de la Mediterrània*, 25, 27-34.
- Rasheed, L. A., & Abdullah, T. L. (2023). A Study of Amitav Ghosh's The Calcutta Chromosome in the Scope of Eco-postcolonialism.”.
- Roach, C. M. (2003). *Mother/Nature, Popular Culture and Environmental Ethics*. USA: Indiana University Press. (1-215)
- Sheth, M. J., & Salisbury, J. D. (2022). “School’s a Lie”: Toward Critical Race Intersectional Pedagogy for Youth Intellectual Activism in Policy Partnerships. *Educational Policy*, 36(1), 100-141. <https://doi.org/10.1177/08959048211059478>
- Shiva, V. (2015). *The Vandana Shiva Reader*. University Press of Kentucky. University Press of Kentucky.
- Solnit, R. (2020, February 29). Rebecca Solnit: 'Younger feminists have shifted my understanding'. The Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/feb/29/rebecca-solnit-younger-feminists-shift-understanding-give-new-tools>
- SuperSummary. (2021). *The Seed Keeper* summary. Retrieved June 2, 2024, from <https://www.supersummary.com/the-seed-keeper/summary/>
- Thompson, J. (2017). Ecofeminism: the path towards healing the earth. *Dialogue & Nexus*, 4(1), 8.
- Vijayaraj, B. (2017). A Comprehensive Study of Ecofeminism. *The Anthropologist*, 30(1), 68-75.
- Virtanen, T. (2012). Individual and Societal Control in Lois Lowry's *The Giver* (Pro gradu thesis). University of Tampere, Tampere, Finland.
- Warren, K. J. (Ed.). (1997). *Ecofeminism: Women, culture, nature*. Indiana University Press.
- Warren, P. M. (1991). The Minoan civilization of Crete and the volcano at Thera. *Journal of the Ancient Chronology Forum*, 4(1), 29-39.
- Zhurkova, M. S., & Khomutnikova, E. A. (2019, July). The Genesis of Dystopian Meaning Structure and its Relation to Utopian Literary Tradition. In 2nd International Conference on Education Science and Social Development (ESSD 2019) (pp. 186-190). Atlantis Press.