

## **ABSTRACT**

Dissertation Title: ECOCRITICAL NARRATIVES OF HOPE: READING  
SELECTED TEXTS BY MARGARET ATWOOD

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As imaginative literature is one of the most powerful devices for engaging people emotionally as well as intellectually regarding environmental issues and sensitizing them about ecological crises, my thesis studies selected texts by Margaret Atwood, seeing her as a significant voice in the environmental humanities, as her narratives dissect multiple environmentalist perspectives on human and non-human relationships and strive to represent the many ways in which we humans approach the natural world and locate ourselves in the ecosystem. I have attempted a close reading of selected novels, short stories, non-fiction, poetry and interviews by Atwood, as well as select documentaries on Atwood, to observe how she consciously participates in environmentalist debates, creating awareness regarding multiple approaches to common concerns regarding the ecosystem, becoming increasingly vocal on these issues with the passage of time and acquired celebrity and fame. The balance between despair and hope in environmental narratives is critical at a time when the planetary crisis seems almost irretrievable. My thesis investigates how selected texts by Atwood become instrumental in walking the tightrope between holding up a mirror to human culpability in ecological imbalance, and crafting narratives of hope in change and survival, by the imagination of alternative futures based on transformation in action taken in the present. I call these Atwood's ecocritical narratives of hope, as they become crucial tools for navigating 'stories' about extinction, climate change, biodiversity loss, migration and violence against animals and humans, in the battle for resources plaguing the planet today. My thesis traces the way Atwood redefines the possibilities of ecocritical writing by responding to urgent and critical environmental debates right from the beginning of her career as a writer, showcasing both the challenges and possibilities of different kinds of environmentalism.