

**Reimagining Woman-Nature Relationships: Healing,
Transformation, and Empowerment in Sahar Elmougy's
"Misk Attal" (*The Hill's Musk*)**

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Abstract

*This paper explores transformation and empowerment in Sahar Elmougy's *The Hill's Musk* (2017) through the lens of cultural/spiritual ecofeminism. Ecofeminism, analyzing the intertwined oppression of women and nature under patriarchy, informs our reading. Elmougy revitalizes two classical female heroines, adding a third character, employing the technique of rewriting to empower them to transcend societal limits and engage with the natural world.*

*The paper provides a brief ecofeminist framework and delves into character analysis. The novel follows Amina, from Naguib Mahfouz's *Trilogy*; Cathrine, from Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*"; and Mariam, Elmougy's pure creation, through their journeys of healing and transformation. Amina embodies the nurturing Earth figure, demonstrating women's intrinsic environmental connection. Cathrine rediscovers herself in Cairo, embracing independence and creativity. Mariam overcomes depression, finding purpose through her interactions with Amina and nature. The narrative highlights women's solidarity, their harmony with nature, and their transformative potential. Elmougy's ecofeminist setting, the *House of Sirens*, becomes their sanctuary and the incubating haven for Elmougy's women all through the narrative.*

Elmougy's masterful storytelling within ecofeminism exemplifies literature's power to elucidate ecofeminist principles, challenge oppression, and amplify women's narratives. This analysis deeply explores transformation, empowerment, and the interplay between women and their environment, affirming ecofeminism's relevance today.

Key words:

Ecofeminism; Women's narratives; Healing; Transformation; Empowerment; Sahar Elmougy; *The Hill's Musk*; Cultural/Spiritual Ecofeminism; Rewriting; Nurturing Mother Earth; Women Solidarity; Sustainable world.

إعادة تصور العلاقات بين المرأة والطبيعة: التشافي والتحول والتمكين للنساء في رواية مسك التل لسحر الموجي

ملخص البحث

تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية لاستكشاف موضوعات التشافي والتحول وتمكين النساء كما صورتها رواية سحر الموجي مسك التل (2017)، مستخدمة النسوية البيئية خاصة الثقافية/الروحية كإطار نقدي. النسوية البيئية، هي نهج متعدد التخصصات، يدرس الترابط بين اضطهاد المرأة واستغلال الطبيعة، ويسلط الضوء على الآثار الضارة للأنظمة الأبوية على كليهما. في مسك التل، تعيد الموجي تصور بطلتين روائيتين مشهورتين من الأدب الكلاسيكي مع العديد من الشخصيات غير المحورية من الأدب العالمي وتقدم بطلّة ثالثة. تستخدم الموجي تقنية إعادة الكتابة للبطلات الثلاث، وتبث حياة جديدة فيهن وتمنهن فرصة ثانية ليس فقط لتجاوز الحدود المجتمعية، ولكن أيضًا للتفاعل مع العالم الطبيعي بطريقة تمكينية، وتمكينهن من إعادة تعريف أنفسهن وصياغة مسارات جديدة.

تبدأ الورقة البحثية بخلفية نظرية توجز ملاءمة تطبيق النسوية البيئية خاصة في صورتها الثقافية والروحانية في تحليل الرواية. تنتقل الورقة بعد ذلك إلى تحليل متعمق للشخصيات النسائية التي استقتها الكاتبة من أعمال أدبية كلاسيكية من الأدب العالمي وخلقت منها نماذج متشافية متحققة وممكنة من نواتهن الأصلية. تسبر الرواية أعماق رحلات بطلاتها الثلاث: أمينة، بطلّة ثلاثية نجيب محفوظ؛ كاترين، بطلّة رواية مرتفعات وينزينج للكاتبة إميلي برونتي؛ ومريم، من إبداع الموجي نفسها. تخضع هذه الشخصيات لعمليات عميقة من التشافي الجسدي والنفسي والروحي والتحول والتمكين نتيجة تفاعلهن مع الطبيعة من خلال معيشتهم في تناغم معها في بيت السيرينيات ومساعدة بعضهن البعض. تمثل أمينة نموذج "الأرض الأم"، في ربط واضح لأدوار النساء والطبيعة مما يتسق مع النسوية البيئية المتمثلة في ارتباط المرأة الجوهري بالبيئة. بعد رحلة طويلة من التشافي والانتماء للطبيعة ولمجموعة النساء تعيد كاترين اكتشاف نفسها في القاهرة الحديثة، وتكتشف قدرتها على الاستقلال والتعبير الإبداعي. أما مريم الطبيبة النفسية التي عانت من الاكتئاب وخيبة الأمل لسنوات طويلة اثر احباطات حياتها الشخصية والعملية وصددمات طفولتها فتعيد اكتشاف نفسها من خلال تفاعلها مع أمينة والعالم الطبيعي والنساء الأخريات. يؤكد السرد على أهمية تضامن النساء، وعلى تنمية علاقتهم المتناغمة مع الطبيعة، وقدرتهم على التحول للوصول لمرادهم من الحياة. يستمد هذا التحليل من النظريات النسوية البيئية ويقدم نظرة منفتحة حول كيفية قيام الأدب بإلقاء الضوء على مبادئ النسوية البيئية مع تمكين المرأة. تصمم الموجي بيئة خيالية، "بيت السيرينيات"، الذي يقع وسط طبيعة لم تمسها يد الإنسان، مما يوفر لهذه الشخصيات مساحة للتحضير لمغامرتهم في العالم الحديث.

إن قراءة رواية الموجي في ضوء نظرية النسوية البيئية ودراستها من منظور جانبيها الثقافي والنفسي، تفتح المجال لاستكشاف كيف يمكن للأدب أن يسهم بشكل فعال في تحدى الهياكل القمعية بكافة صورها، وتشجيع مناخ بيئي مستدام يهتم بكل فئات المجتمع ويرعاها ويسهم في عمليات التشافي والتطور والتمكين للمرأة مما يؤدي لازدهار المجتمعات بشكل عام للوصول لعالم مستدام.

الكلمات المفتاحية: النسوية البيئية الثقافية/الروحية؛ التحول؛ التشافي؛ مسك التل؛ تمكين المرأة؛ إعادة الكتابة السردية النسوية؛ سحر الموجي؛ التضامن النسوي؛ عالم مستدام.

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Sahar Elmougy, a renowned contemporary Egyptian novelist and academic, has garnered accolades for her literary contributions, particularly in the realm of feminist literature. *The Hill's Musk* (2017) marks a significant point in her career, emerging on the heels of two celebrated short story collections and two novels. *Saydat El-Manam* (1998) and *Aleiha Sagheira* (2003) are her notable short story collections, while *Daryah* (2008) and *Noun* (2008) are her preceding novels. With *The Hill's Musk*, Elmougy embarks on a novel experiment, weaving together heroines from diverse literary works spanning classic and contemporary genres, relocating them to the fictional setting of the House of the Sirens, and endowing them with new narratives to redefine their identities. In this endeavor, three central female characters intersect against all odds, provided with a unique opportunity to rediscover themselves and re-define their lives. This journey of self-discovery and healing entails a profound restructuring of their lives within their newfound world. As Dina Ezzat eloquently puts it in Alahram online, "Sahar El-Mogui'e's latest novel, *The Hill's Musk*, is an adventure into archetypes about women, deconstructed and reformed in the contemporary world." In the same interview, Elmougy talks about her experience in creating these female characters, not from scratch as usual, but each coming loaded with a personal, social, and cultural history.

Beyond its narrative prowess, the novel extends an open invitation to "heal" not only these women, but also the circumstances of women's lives and the environment. Within this context, Elmougy emerges as an agent for ecological sustainability, akin to Taha Hussein, whose *Duaa Elkarawan* (1934), translated as *The Nightingale Prayer*, is recognized as one of the early manifestations of ecofeminism in Arabic literature during the early 20th century. A prior collaborative work with a colleague examined Hussein's novel and established it as an ecofeminist literary

piece that identified and explored the connection between women and the environment long before ecofeminism was formalized in Western academia¹.

This paper attempts to analyze Sahar Elmougy's *The Hill's Musk* through the lens of ecofeminism, with specific focus on cultural and spiritual ecofeminist perspectives. By exploring how the novel intertwines themes of women's identities, nature, and healing, this study aims to demonstrate how Elmougy's work exemplifies and contributes to the discourse of Arabic cultural/ spiritual ecofeminist literature. Through this analysis, it seeks to illuminate the novel's potential to inspire ecological sustainability, social justice, and the empowerment of women, offering a fresh perspective on the transformative power of literature within contemporary Arabic feminist discourse.

Theoretical Framework

Ecofeminism, a term originally coined by Francois D'Aubonne in the 1970s, underscores the intrinsic link between the oppression of women and the exploitation of the environment, seeing these forms of subjugation as parallel issues to be addressed and treated jointly. While the scope of this paper does not include an exhaustive historical analysis of ecofeminism as a literary theory or environmental movement, as this was previously addressed in the collaborative work mentioned above, it strives to delve into *The Hill's Musk* to provide a reading that establishes it as a unique and exemplary work of cultural and spiritual ecofeminist literature.

Ecofeminism recognizes the interconnectedness of social justice issues, especially the oppression of marginalized groups, predominantly women, with environmental crises. Emerging in the 1970s and 1980s in response to the environmental problems, ecofeminism contends that patriarchal societies have played a significant role in the exploitation and degradation of both women and the environment, emphasizing that these issues cannot be effectively addressed in isolation. As Souter aptly notes, "Ecofeminism is a social movement and an intellectual discipline that links the exploitation and degradation of the natural world to the systemic oppression of women and other marginalized groups" (21). Ecofeminism

posits that masculine dominance lies at the root of climate change and environmental destruction on one front and various forms of social injustices, particularly gender-based ones, on the other. As Nasrullah Mabrol points out in his essay on the *Literariness* website, ecofeminists assert that the legacy of Western colonial discourse perpetuated the notion that 'civilization' entailed distancing from 'nature.' The closer non-European peoples and women were perceived to be to nature, the more 'inherently' inferior they were considered, justifying the patriarchal/Western domination of other cultures and lands. This perspective underscores how women and nature were construed through capitalist, patriarchal, and colonialist lenses as weak, inferior, and negative commodities, while positioning men as agents of change and order.

As ecofeminism continues to evolve, it branches into various subcategories, each focusing on specific issues. Of particular relevance to this study is cultural and spiritual ecofeminism. Cultural ecofeminism, as articulated by Charlene Spretnak in "Green Politics: The Spiritual Dimension," highlights women's distinctive relationship with nature, rooted in gender roles and nurturing ideals. The contrast in how women perceive nature compared to men is grounded in cultural norms and values. This approach, by integrating cultural dimensions, acknowledges the intrinsic value of diverse cultural practices and spiritual beliefs, emphasizing collective responsibility toward the environment and marginalized communities.

In "Deeper than Deep Ecology: The Eco-Feminist Connection" Ariel Salleh takes this argument a step further by examining the spiritual dimension. She posits that the current environmental crisis results from the patriarchal erasure of women's spiritual connection to nature. This perspective calls for a return to a more spiritual and less materialistic way of life, including the restoration of women's spiritual bond with nature, recognizing the interconnection between gender and the environment, and asserting that liberating women's spiritual connection to nature can contribute to the healing of both. This perspective is often referred to as spiritual ecofeminism, a subcategory embraced by influential ecofeminist authors such as Starhawk, Riane Eisler, Carol J. Adams, and others. In "Spiritual Ecofeminism/Cultural Ecofeminism", Starhawk, prominent in

this field, defines this ideology as an earth-based spirituality that venerates Earth as a living entity, emphasizing our interconnectedness and communal bonds. To him, unlike being confined to a particular religion, spiritual ecofeminism centers on ethics of care, compassion, respect of nature, adopting a feminine perspective, and prioritize strong community values. (20) The core principles of earth-based spiritualities revolve around the presence of the Goddess within the natural world, the interconnectedness of the mind, body, and nature, and the adoption of a compassionate lifestyle (pages 261-263). Many spiritual ecofeminists draw inspiration from ancient traditions, including the worship of Gaia, or Mother Earth, the Goddess of nature and spirituality.

In her book *Radical Ecology*, Carolyn Merchant refers to spiritual ecofeminism as "cultural ecofeminism," celebrating the connection between women and nature through the revival of ancient rituals centered on goddess worship, the moon, animals, and the female reproductive system (126). Cultural ecofeminists value intuition, an ethic of caring, and the interrelationships between humans and nature. Susan Griffin describes spiritual ecofeminism as an invitation for humanity "to embrace a holistic view of reality, to recognize the interconnectedness of all life, and to work towards a just and sustainable world" (Woman and Nature 149).

In *Women Who Run with the Wolves*, Clarisa Pincola Estes adeptly explores the link between wildlife and the primal nature of femininity, which she dubs the Wild Woman, and the threats they both face.

Wildlife and the Wild Woman are both endangered species. Over time, we have seen the feminine instinctive nature looted, driven back, and overbuilt. For long periods, it has been mismanaged like wildlife and wildlands... The pristine wilderness of our planet disappears as the understanding of our own inner wild natures fades. It is not so difficult to comprehend why old forests and old women are viewed as not very important resources. It is not such a mystery. (10)

At the heart of cultural/spiritual ecofeminism lies the commitment to creating a healed and just world, one in which no single group dominates and respects holistic and organic processes. Within ecofeminist

literary discourse, themes of rebirth and the thriving of nature and femininity from the violence and exploitation of patriarchy and capitalism are paramount. Intuition, holistic connections with the environment, an ethic of care and collaboration, and the belief that all forms of life hold intrinsic value are critical facets of cultural/spiritual ecofeminism that will be explored in the analysis of "The Hill's Musk."

Ecofeminist Themes and Narrative Innovation in *The Hill's Musk*

The forthcoming analysis of *The Hill's Musk* aims to demonstrate the novel's intricate engagement with themes closely associated with cultural/spiritual ecofeminism. It explores the intricate connections between the oppression of women and the natural world, the process of healing and restoring human-environment relationships, and the rejection of patriarchal values and systems of power, including capitalism and colonialism, which have contributed to environmental and social degradation. This goal will be accomplished by tracing the evolution of the three major female characters and highlighting the distinctions between their fulfilled versions that Elmougy creates and their earlier iterations. The three heroines undergo a transformative journey, ultimately becoming healed and self-fulfilled beings intimately connected to their natural surroundings. Additionally, the paper examines the novel's structure. What sets it apart as a work of ecofeminist literature is its narrative approach: the idea of rewriting women's lives aligns seamlessly with the principles of ecofeminism. In doing so, the paper aims to highlight that the novel is a profound expression of cultural/spiritual ecofeminism.

Elmougy rewrites the life stories of classic female characters and subtly links their fates and mindsets to their environment, creating a reflective symbiosis. Elmougy's female characters, initially ensnared by traditional patriarchal societies, evolve into healed, self-fulfilled beings intricately connected to their natural environment. *The Hill's Musk* encapsulates ecofeminist principles, promoting the concepts of healing, women's solidarity, rebirth, and agency for women, the environment, and the world at large. Elmougy endeavors to rescue her heroines—Amina, Catherine, and Mariam—from their oppressive, male-dominated societies and the historical periods they inhabit. This second chance she provides allows them to reconstruct their lives outside patriarchal constraints, aligning with ecofeminist principles of healing, rebirth, self-realization, and women's solidarity and by creating an enabling environment for their natural growth and development.

Elmougy's masterpiece re-invents these famous female characters from classical novels, plays, poems, and mythology, re-constructs their identities in a way that empowers them to free themselves from the shackles of patriarchal dominance they suffer from in their original works. This act in itself is a kind of "revival"; it is just like allowing nature to heal by removing the damage and interference of patriarchy. The main idea of the book is giving second chances to those females; and breathing into them new, more fully rejuvenating breath.

The opening lines of the novel toss the reader right inside the world of the group of females who live in the house of Sirens and establish the link between them and nature in one catchy paragraph:

No one would have imagined that the day that seemed pleasant and kind would end in something more like a nightmare. In the morning, a cheerful sun shone, announcing the end of a long winter which the women of the house had spent by the fireplace, drinking cups of hot chocolate and cinnamon, and exchanging short, truncated conversations dominated by lethargy from the cold and the long nights of winter. But this morning, their voices talking and laughing had risen in the kitchen, and the food basket was filled with enough food to spend a day at the lake. The little tribe moved, and the sun blessed their steps and dragged them down the hills and into the forest. (5)

In this short paragraph Elmougy manages to strike two birds with one stone. First, she establishes the link between the women and nature: their life and feelings are bound by the state of nature and that the harmony between them is obvious rain or shine. It is noteworthy that these women come from different cultures and speak different languages, but they can still understand one another and form a net community. The decisive first sentence also prepares the reader for the significant transition that is about to happen as Amina and Mariam will find themselves after the storm in their new time/space modern Cairo where they bump into Mariam in front of AlHussain Mosque to start another phase of their journey towards rebirth and healing; and to construct a smaller tribe made up only of these three heroines whose fate gets entangled from the moment they see one another.

Elmougy's enthralling opening paragraph plunges readers headlong into a realm where female characters seamlessly coexist in perfect harmony with the natural world. This initial passage serves as a captivating overture, skillfully laying the foundation for the characters' odyssey of healing and profound transformation that awaits them. With

lyrical prose and vivid imagery, it evokes a sense of wonder and anticipation, inviting readers to embark on a narrative voyage where the boundaries between human and nature blur, and where the collective pursuit of rejuvenation and metamorphosis takes center stage.

The very title of the novel, *The Hill's Musk*, resonates deeply with nature, signaling to the reader that "musk," an elemental facet of the natural world, is destined to assume a pivotal role within the narrative. As we delve into the text, a compelling pattern emerges: the characters encounter this alluring fragrance only when they attain a state of mental and psychological equilibrium, irrespective of the tumultuous circumstances surrounding them. Throughout the novel, Elmougy artfully forges and maintains the profound connection between musk and womanhood from the very inception to the final chapters. Amina, dwelling within the ethereal House of Sirens, recalls the scent of musk permeating her days within this otherworldly, castle-like haven shared exclusively by these fictitious female protagonists.

The first occasion Mariam encounters this scent is within a dream, just prior to her fateful meeting with Amina and Cathy. This olfactory memory resurfaces while she stands beneath the shower's cascade:

The bathroom was filled with a potent fragrance, perhaps musk incense drifting from a neighboring apartment. Her dream possessed a scent akin to this. She strained to recall its details: a somber gray sky, perhaps rain. (17)

The musky aroma, rekindling the essence of her dream, ignites within her the courage to undertake an act she had long shied away from for years:

She turned off the water while she was making a big and fateful decision, and the world should stop in honor of it. Mariam will go out this morning. Yes, she will go to Al-Azhar neighborhood. Mariam heard in her head a disapproving voice repeating "don't be that reckless, it is not safe to do so". (17)

This inner voice, filled with disapproval, echoes from her long-depressed self, a self that had withdrawn from life's embrace and confined itself within the walls of her apartment for an extended period. Sahar Elmougy's narrative appears to convey a profound message: the yearning for life, kindled within Mariam by the aroma of musk, possesses a strength that surpasses the grip of years of depression and the haunting specter of fear.

Amina and Cathy, amidst the backdrop of a tempestuous storm, simultaneously encounter the unmistakable scent of musk as they find themselves in the ancient streets of Cairo near the AlHussain Mosque. In this poignant moment, Sahar Elmougy artfully weaves a profound

connection between the destinies of these three remarkable women and the natural essence embodied by musk. This evocative fragrance becomes the catalyst that defies the odds, drawing them together and inspiring a collective journey towards healing, self-discovery, and the authoring of new life narratives.

The novel comes full circle in its closing scene, mirroring its opening moments with the recurring theme of musk. As Amina and Mariam decide to embark on a visit to old Cairo, a place laden with history and meaning, they have an unexpected encounter with none other than Virginia Woolf. Virginia has just arrived from the House of Sirens, another symbolic link to the narrative's beginning. In this serendipitous meeting, Virginia Woolf, the iconic writer and a fictional character, queries Amina and Mariam about the scent she detects in the air, wondering if it is the unmistakable aroma of musk. This closing scene beautifully encapsulates the novel's thematic thread, bringing it to a poetic conclusion. The musk, which has served as a symbol of healing, transformation, and the interconnectedness of women with nature, persists as a lingering presence, reinforcing the novel's underlying message of renewal and empowerment.

Elmougy's narrative suggests that this fragrant encounter symbolizes not only a convergence of paths but also a convergence with nature itself. It signifies the harmonious interplay between the characters and the environment, highlighting the idea that the healing power of nature can serve as a guiding force in their transformative journeys. The scent of musk becomes a unifying line that threads their destinies together, compelling them to traverse their respective paths of growth and renewal as they navigate life's intricate tapestry.

Unveiling the Shackles of Patriarchy

To empower her female characters, Elmougy deftly navigates away from the oppressive and dominating cultures that define the works these characters originate from. In place of these stifling paradigms, she champions an unwavering commitment to sisterhood and a deep reverence for all facets of life. This transformative narrative journey reconstructs the intricate relationship between women and nature, ultimately reshaping it into a discourse of empowerment. Before delving into this transformation, it is essential to examine the contexts in which these characters initially emerge. Amina, married to the infamous Si ElSaid, hails from early 20th-century middle-class Egypt—a society where women were culturally conditioned to be submissive and voiceless.

Within the confines of her domestic realm, she assumes the roles of a docile wife, a nurturing mother, and a diligent homemaker. Mahfouz's trilogy primarily reflects a social and political landscape that adheres to patriarchal norms, underscoring the pervasive influence of male dominance.

Mariam, on the other hand, originating from a more contemporary Cairo, is the daughter of a liberal and enlightened university professor. She is highly educated and culturally refined. However, even amidst this veneer of modernity, she remains ensnared by the same patriarchal system that once dominated Amina's existence. This deeply ingrained and insidiously pervasive system continues to subjugate women, regardless of their perceived freedom. Mariam's marriage to Raouf, and her reluctant acceptance of the role of a second wife relegated to the shadows, underscores the harsh reality of her situation. Denied even her fervent desire to embrace motherhood, she succumbs to despair, ultimately withdrawing from the world around her. Her professional commitments, despite her role as a psychiatrist, prove insufficient to free her from this emotional dilemma.

Catherine, hailing from an English milieu in the late 19th century, finds herself ensnared within a society governed by rigid social hierarchies and deeply ingrained gender norms. Initially perceived as a spirited and independent child by her brother and father, she roams the moors freely alongside Heathcliff. However, as she matures into a young woman, societal pressures compel her to conform to established norms. She willingly forsakes the love of her life, Heathcliff, in favor of Edgar, a decision made in pursuit of social standing and acceptance.

Though these three characters, originating from diverse backgrounds, share a common experience of submission to a patriarchal system that stifles their individuality and suppresses their desires. Elmougy's narrative embarks on a transformative mission to liberate them from these constraints and propel them toward a path of self-discovery, empowerment, and liberation from the oppressive norms that have constrained them for so long.

A Paradisiacal Haven for Transformation and Empowerment

Sahar Elmougy ingeniously conjures the imaginative realm known as the House of Sirens, a fictional setting that serves as the crucible for her characters' profound transformations. This captivating location is enveloped by unspoiled nature, transcending the limitations of conventional time and space, and offering a unique milieu for the heroines' journeys. Amina, mesmerized by the lush landscape

surrounding her, finds herself awestruck by the breathtaking natural beauty that unfolds before her eyes. The verdant scenery stretches endlessly, resembling a divine creation, and Amina marvels at its uniqueness, perceiving the land itself as a living entity, breathing and evolving with each passing moment. She wonders if what she sees around the house is Paradise:

“Allah!” Amina’s heart and lips kept repeating the word endlessly.

Is this the paradise that the prophet describes as “a place that no eye had ever seen and no ear had ever heard and never occurred to a human heart”?! She was overcome by bewilderment. Are there houses like ours in paradise, even if they were more like fancy palaces? Do people speak all kinds of languages there but understand one another? Why there is no single man here? Is there a library in paradise? (50-51)

The colossal trees that grace the landscape appear timeless, as though they have stood there in perpetuity, bearing witness to the ever-changing world around them. The vast expanse of open land seems to stretch infinitely, disappearing into the horizon. Notably, there is no sign of human presence in this pristine wilderness. Instead, the sky overhead is filled with the graceful flight of birds, while groups of sheep peacefully graze on the luxuriant grass below. Wild horses roam freely between the hills, as if they are the true masters of this untamed realm, claiming it as their own. (51)

This vivid description of nature's grandeur and untouched splendor serves as a testament to the unspoiled beauty of the land, a place where the harmony of the natural world reigns supreme, undisturbed by the hand of humanity. It does not take Amina long to notice that there was no trace of “males” there (51). Within this remarkable setting, Elmougy explores profound life questions, allowing for the convergence of disparate eras, generations, and geographical landscapes. In doing so, it mirrors the essence of a sustainable world—a world where the threads of human existence are interwoven with the enduring rhythms of nature, a testament to the timeless interconnectedness of life's intricate tapestry.

The House of Sirens as a Catalyst for Transformation

Furthermore, this extraordinary locale serves as an incubator for two iconic heroines drawn from classic Arabic and English literature: Amina, a character from Mahfouz's Trilogy, and Catherine, hailing from Bronte's "Wuthering Heights." Alongside these literary luminaries, the

House of Sirens welcomes a diverse ensemble of famous characters representing a multitude of genres from world literature. Among them is Virginia Woolf, not in her customary role as a writer but as a character drawn from Michael Cunningham's novel, *The Hours*.

The sojourn of Amina and Catherine within the House of Sirens acts as profound preparation for their reentry into the modern world of 2010 Cairo. Here, they cross paths with Dr. Mariam, a character uniquely crafted by Elmougy herself, who, later in the narrative, finds herself granted the opportunity to experience life within the same enigmatic house during a momentary coma. Together, these remarkable women embark on a transformative journey, one that traverses the realms of emotional, physical, and social healing. Through their shared experiences, they emerge as fully realized individuals, no longer subservient or subordinate, but rather as active and empowered participants within the tapestry of society.

The choice of naming the house where our heroines find refuge as the House of "Sirens" is intriguing and laden with metaphorical significance. In Greek mythology, Sirens are ethereal beings celebrated for their mesmerizing voices, luring sailors toward their fateful demise upon perilous shores. Within the tapestry of Elmougy's narrative, the presence and alluring melodies of the Sirens assume profound metaphorical significance. Instead of instilling fear, the Sirens' song becomes emblematic of the vigor and exhilaration inherent in life itself, igniting a profound inspiration within our heroines. It compels them to boldly venture forth, to navigate the uncharted skies of their own existence, and to seize the limitless opportunities that lie before them.

Thus, the House of Sirens serves as a backdrop where Elmougy creates the ideal environment for reimagining the lives of her heroines and equipping them with the tools that facilitate their healing and rebirth. The female characters in the house cultivate their crops in lush gardens, enjoy a nearby river and forest during spring and summer, and form a close-knit community. This place, untouched by men, becomes the nurturing ground for Amina's personal growth and self-discovery, reflecting the harmony of the surrounding natural world. It is within the house's extensive library that Amina discovers her passion for learning a new language, an endeavor inspired by her friend Laila from Latifa Elzayat's *The Open Door*. Amina embarks on a transformative journey, one characterized by self-discovery and the adoption of a perspective that allows her to "see yourself as if you were another person" (166).

The House of Sirens, with its proximity to virgin nature, untouched by male exploitation, emerges as a common prerequisite for the healing

of these female characters. Elmougy appears to suggest that for them to undergo genuine transformation and transcend the traumas inflicted by patriarchal systems, they must spend even fleeting moments in authentic communion with both caring women and the natural uncontaminated world. Women solidarity and bonding to nature, Elmougy seems to be saying, are indispensable elements of healing. Elmougy intricately interweaves the healing of these women with their relationships with one another and their environment, thus establishing a foundational element of cultural and spiritual ecofeminism.

Amina: The Multifaceted Mother nature, Healer, and Entrepreneur

Whether within the mystical confines of the House of Sirens or amidst the bustling modernity of Cairo, Amina emerges as an enduring motherly figure, a character archetype that persists from the very outset of the narrative until its culmination. This analogy is firmly rooted in the opening paragraphs of the novel, establishing Amina as an embodiment of "mother nature" itself. There, beneath the expansive canopy of a majestic tree, she sits with a basket of sustenance by her side, while her fellow women disperse into the lush forest, each pursuing her individual passions and interests. Amina's warm and compassionate rapport with the diverse array of women inhabiting the house imparts upon her an aura of nurturing and caring reminiscent of nature's own benevolent forces.

Yet Elmougy, through her narrative, provides a subtle warning to the reader: this first appearance of Amina differs significantly from the passive and voiceless character we recognize from Mahfouz's trilogy. This Amina, situated beneath the tree, engrosses herself in the pages of a book, revealing layers of depth and complexity to her character. In the unfolding story, Amina evolves into more than just a nurturing and healing mother figure; she evolves into an avid reader, a translator, and an enterprising woman with the capacity to offer support and aid to her fellow women on psychological, physical, and even financial planes. In this nuanced characterization, Elmougy lays the groundwork for the exploration of cultural and spiritual ecofeminism, setting the stage for the narrative's profound journey of resurrection and revival, for Amina herself, the other women, and the world they inhabit.

Amina, akin to "Mother Earth" herself, cares for the well-being of all other characters, with a special focus on Cathy and Mariam with whom she continues her role in the modern world after she is out of the House of Sirens. Beyond her role as a nurturing presence, Amina emerges as a formidable entrepreneur within the narrative. She not only identifies solutions for a myriad of challenges but also assumes the mantle of a proactive problem solver, providing practical resolutions to a host of dilemmas. Her resourcefulness and acumen serve as a beacon of guidance, illuminating the path forward for those around her. One of Amina's most remarkable feats lies in her capacity to liberate Mariam, the psychiatrist, from the grips of her prolonged depression. With unwavering support and encouragement, Amina serves as Mariam's anchor, coaxing her out of the depths of despair and guiding her toward a reawakening. Amina's influence and compassionate intervention ultimately empower Mariam to rediscover the vibrancy of life and embrace its boundless possibilities once more.

But to fulfill her transformative role in the lives of others, Amina must embark on a profound personal journey, one that necessitates traversing the shadowy corridors of her own past. It is when Amina stumbles upon Mahfouz's Trilogy within the library's hallowed shelves, uncovering the intricacies of her own life, as well as that of her husband and children posthumously, that she is confronted with a haunting revelation. She comes to realize that her existence had been woefully incomplete. She had been confined within the suffocating constraints of a life dictated solely by her husband's authority, with no role or identity beyond the boundaries he allowed.

As she delves into the volume of letters of Virginia Woolf, which she later undertakes the monumental task of translating into Arabic, Amina grapples with the very essence of her being. Her journey of self-discovery mirrors the sentiments articulated by Woolf herself: "We do not know our souls." (125) This profound realization leads her to question the depths of her own identity and the extent to which she has truly embraced the vast expanse of her own soul. She later narrates how she felt to Mariam:

When I went to the House of Sirens...I found myself seeing what's inside me and asking who I am, and I discovered that I don't know

my soul. I know some parts of it, but there were many parts that I never stepped into or even occurred to my mind. Books made me discover the depths of the forest of the soul that Mrs. Virginia talked about. (126)

Amina's courage shines through as she candidly acknowledges to herself, "In Bain ElKasserine, I never asked myself who I am. I was Ahmed's Abdel-Gawad's wife, mother of Khadija, Aisha, Fahmy, Kamal, and Yassin." This profound revelation lays bare the stark truth of her former existence, where her identity was irrevocably entwined with the roles she played in her husband's household, as the dutiful wife and nurturing mother. That is why her life takes a harrowing turn when her husband heartlessly expels her from their home as a punishment for her perceived transgression - the grave "crime" of visiting AlHussain Mosque without obtaining his prior consent. Amina's subsequent horror at the abrupt upheaval of her life reveals the depths of her dependence and the sense of voicelessness that had shackled her past existence.

Sahar Elmougy's narrative empowers Amina with the tools to rebuild her life and extend her nurturing influence on other women, thus magnifying her role as a mother figure. Her inner work and introspective revelations serve as the anchor of her newfound strength and sense of purpose. Her self-image crystallizes with greater clarity as she learns what she can forge a new life of her own. She learns to trust her own intuition, a distinctive trait encouraged by spiritual ecofeminism. This intuitive sense had previously led her to question her husband's actions, even though she had been oblivious to how he spent his time outside their home while they were together. Through this journey of self-trust and self-discovery, Amina emerges as a beacon of empowerment, both for herself and for the women whose lives she will later touch and transform.

Another significant event that cast a long shadow over Amina's past life was the tragic death of her beloved son, Fahmy, at the hands of the English colonizers during a demonstration. Only when Amina gains a broader awareness of the world beyond the confines of her home does she begin to grasp the true significance of this heartbreaking event. In Mahfouz's portrayal of Amina, her motivations are primarily driven by maternal instincts, and she remains largely oblivious to the broader

context of colonialism. Consequently, Fahmy's loss is rendered all the more tragic and inscrutable to her. She struggles to comprehend why her son would risk his life by participating in a demonstration that could lead to his untimely demise.

Elmougy's Amina, on the other hand, undergoes a profound transformation in her understanding of her son's motives. She no longer views Fahmy's actions as reckless youthful attachment to politics, a perspective she had held in her previous life, one that had led her to incessantly admonish him for associating with rebels. In *The Hill's Musk*, she gains a deep appreciation for Fahmy's unwavering pursuit of something profoundly precious: freedom. She recognizes that Fahmy had relentlessly strived for liberation from the oppressive yoke of colonialism, not only for himself but also for the nation. This newfound perspective allows Amina to shed any remnants of guilt or doubt about her anger toward her husband who got mad when she sent Yassin to tell him that she wanted to participate in the funeral. She wishes she had defied him and insisted on being an integral part of her son's funeral, a gesture that Si Elsaid had prohibited on account of deeming it unfit for women. This shift in perspective underscores Amina's evolving understanding of her son's noble cause and her unwavering support for his pursuit of freedom and justice.

Much like anyone embarking on a journey within, Amina grapples with occasional bouts of self-doubt and is besieged by moments of self-sabotage. However, what distinguishes Amina is her determined spirit, one that refuses to yield to the suffocating clutches of such emotions. She steadfastly navigates the turbulent seas of life, undeterred by the challenges that beset her or the haunting ghosts of her past. During the most trying moments of her journey or when she finds herself ensnared by the shadows of her own history, Amina employs a powerful tool. She repeatedly invokes a philosophy, one that resonates not only with her own essence but also with the profound beliefs of Sahar Elmougy herself. This philosophy becomes her guiding light, a beacon of resilience that sustains her through life's most tough trials and tribulations as her following monologue shows:

Amina! Aren't you the one who always says, "life is nothing but a chunk of doe"?! What is wrong with you Amina! Why are you

wasting your time handling loaves of old bread and leaving the fresh doe that awaits baking aside unattended? Hold on Amina, hold tight to the rope of faith and don't let go of it. ... In the past I thought that faith is only faith in Allah. In the House of Sirens, while I was changing and witnessing other women change, I found myself having faith in human beings. ... When I came back here, I found myself having faith in life itself as it gave me one chance after another as if it says to me: C'mon Amina, let's see what you will bake this time. (272)

In a remarkably short span after her arrival in Cairo, Amina undergoes a profound transformation, effectively redefining herself from the ground up. She manages to re-invent her life from scratch; she finds a job, rents an apartment, takes care of Cathy and Mariam, befriends all women in the neighborhood she resides, and actively solves their problems. To top it all, she finally plans a project that will secure them all financially, one that all the women to work from the security of their own homes. She does this with the ease and confidence of a mother figure/entrepreneur who keeps giving her children just like mother nature itself. At the hands of Elmougy, Amina the submissive and ostensibly weak housewife who once resided in Bain AlKasrain has been reborn as a resilient and astute entrepreneur, one who studies the market, finds what it lacks and provides opportunities.

Amina's Role as a Healer (Mother Nature)

Throughout the course of the novel, Amina emerges as a character endowed with remarkable healing abilities. Her nurturing and restorative powers are prominently showcased, particularly within the confines of the House of Sirens. In this otherworldly sanctuary, she assumes the role of caretaker for Cathy, tending to her during bouts of fever and nightmares that leave Cathy drained and disoriented. Amina's extensive knowledge of herbs, cultivated and employed for various ailments, further underscores her role as a healer. Her reliance on nature and all-natural remedies resonates deeply with the ecofeminist ethos that Sahar Elmougy embraces, endowing Amina with this transformative capacity. Cathy is struck by the profundity of Amina's healing prowess, marveling at her extraordinary capacity to absorb the pain of others with a simplicity and

unwavering faith that defies conventional understanding. Amina's healing touch, serves as a lifeline that repeatedly pulls Cathrine back from the throes of debilitating seizures:

Where did you get it, Amina? That amazing ability to absorb the pain of others. With all this simplicity. With all this certainty and faith! Cathrine thought that Amina's hand, which never tired of changing the cold water compresses over her head, is the thing that always brought her back from seizures. (200)

However, it is with Mariam, who has endured years of depression and later a debilitating stroke, that Amina's healing abilities shine most brilliantly. In the hospital, where Mariam lies in a coma, her friend Zaza, a physician, is at a loss regarding how to aid her. Amina's unique healing power is fueled by her innate motherly instinct and a profound sense of benevolence that Mariam clearly sees and acknowledges during her time in the House of Sirens where Amina is the healer and all other women of the house assist her to take care of Mariam and bring her back to life. During her period of recovery, Mariam perceives Amina's care as a profound reward, akin to a warm bath, bestowed upon herself for successfully pulling Mariam back from the abyss of death. Amina sets up a strict regimen for Mariam, comprising a diet, early sleep and daily strolls within the room and corridors of the House of Sirens. Emotional restraint is emphasized, with strong emotions seen as transgressions not to be tolerated. As days pass, Mariam experiences a gradual revival. Her mood brightens, sleep deepens, and the intensity of her nightmares diminishes:

Mariam looked at Amina as she continued humming, and she felt that the warm bath is the award that Amina proudly gives herself after her success in restoring Mariam from the clutches of death. Amina had set a strict routine for her starting with the food which was mostly liquids, fresh juices, and jugs of water with lemon juice and ginger, sleeping early, and walking inside the room, then in the corridors of the house with assistance Catherine. It is understood, of course, that strong emotion is one of the major sins that will not be tolerated. So, Maryam should stop talking and asking questions. Every day, Mariam took a step closer to recovery. Her mood

gradually improved and her sleep became deeper, and the intensity of the nightmares subsided. (159-160)

It is paramount to note that healing, in this narrative, occurs only when the characters are in harmonious communion with nature, reinforcing the profound link between women and the natural world. Within the House of Sirens, the healing journey commences, as illustrated in the case of Amina and Mariam. It is also noteworthy that Dr. Mariam, initially skeptical of the narratives of Amina and Cathy about the House of Sirens, remains unchanged throughout the novel until she herself experiences the House of Sirens during her coma. It is the compact effect of the women and nature which contributes to her recovery, which again reinforces the ecofeminist premise that Elmougy maintains all through the novel. Amina's multifaceted character seamlessly combines her roles as a mother figure, healer, and entrepreneur, creating a powerful and inspiring portrayal of growth, independence, and empowerment.

Cathrine's development

Just like she does with Amina, Elmougy re-invents Cathrine; she traces her compelling development as she navigates her way through the harsh modern world in which she must rely solely on her wits and support herself without a male figure to take care of her. The obstinate, mischievous, spoiled, and wild Cathrine Earnshaw who damages her life and that of her lover and husband in *Wuthering Hights* becomes a sensible, responsible, and resourceful woman who manages to secure herself a teaching job in an international school in Katamyia for a decent salary. She does what it takes to be able to forge a place for herself in modern Cairo:

Over the past month, Cathrine re-wrote for herself a new life story whose heroine is a 25-year-old English lady. She finished her university studies at the University of Brighton and worked as a teacher for four years. Then she decided to travel the world, beginning with Egypt, where she intends to spend at least four or five years. So when The director of human resources, Mr. Hussein Abdel-Mu'tal, began directing his questions to her. She had a huge wealth of answers that flowed with such spontaneity that she was amazed. (67)

With financial independence, Cathy's view of herself starts to shift; she is no longer susceptible to fits of anger, headaches, fever, or childish

behavior. She starts to realize her worth and re-define her identity as a mature and responsible woman. In contemporary Cairo, Elmougy employs the way her female characters respond to nature to shape their self-perception, allowing their inner selves to resonate with their connection to the natural environment that surrounds them. Cathy, whose previous world was characterized by harsh, jagged black mountains, overcast skies, and relentless rain, discovers modern Cairo as a wondrous place. Facing the vast Nile River in front of Mariam's home in ElRowda and basking in daily sunshine, she undergoes a remarkable transformation. In her past life in England, she is frequently consumed by anger, indignation, and, most significantly, confusion regarding her true desires. However, in Cairo, she radiates vitality, displaying enthusiasm in her job search and exhibiting a newfound certainty about her relationship with Yousuf. When describing her feelings to Mariam, Cathy often uses nature as a metaphorical language to convey her emotions:

I feel like there is a *storm* in my brain, but it is not a winter wind. It is more like a stream of air in the beginning of spring, and the world around me is exploding with colors. While I was walking today, I felt the pores of my body opening to the sun, to the warm air, to the sounds of cars, people, and vendors, the bell of the wheels, the squeal of the brakes, and music... I feel everything as if I were a dry land that opens to the rain (27).

Cathrine, as envisioned by her creator in *The Hill's Musk*, characterizes her personality and outlook on life using natural imagery. In "Wuthering Heights," she was adrift, uncertain of her true desires, akin to the foggy Yorkshire skies that obscured clarity. In Cathrine's own words, she articulates how she feels about her new environment: "Maybe because here, under this sun, I feel completely exposed, with no trace of a cloud to offer solitude for me to confront the inner demons... But simultaneously, I'm irresistibly drawn towards life with a fervent energy" (71).

It is this vital force that propels her to reevaluate her past and choose a different path when presented with a second chance. In Sahar Elmougy's portrayal, Cathrine exudes vitality, embodying a fulfilled, self-reliant, and resourceful woman with exceptional self-control. Furthermore, she forges a balanced relationship with Yousef, a playwright teaching theatre at the same school. To top that, she discovers her talent for writing drama, collaborating with Yousef on a play, despite never having experienced a theater performance in her previous life. Much like Amina, her stay at the House of Sirens serves as an incubation period, allowing her to unearth her latent potential. She remarks that her

knowledge of theater and drama was gleaned entirely from reading plays in the House of Sirens' library.

Mariam's development

The arrival of Amina and Catherine into the stagnant existence of Mariam, a contemporary Egyptian psychiatrist on the brink of retirement due to her battle with depression, profoundly transforms her life. Initially, Mariam is skeptical of the stories shared by Amina and Catherine about a house inhabited by fictional characters from Arabic and world literature coexisting. However, fate intervenes, and she soon finds herself in the same house during her coma, where she personally experiences the solidarity of women and a profound connection with the natural world which, in addition to Amina's efforts, help her heal and regain her life.

Elmougy vividly portrays Mariam's contemplations regarding her desolate and melancholic life before encountering Amina:

She saw in her imagination nothing but this rigid face and the glassy eyes that had accompanied her since Nagy died. Those years began as a vast expanse of ice, an extended, featureless time for a quarter of a century. Maryam moved from the house to the hospital and the clinic, her body neither feeling nor reacting, and her very being wandering aimlessly in a desolate land that Mariam did not know its location. She tried to remember something of value, an experience or even a moment for herself. She did not chatter over a single image that deserved to be included in the album of memories, as if she were a separate entity or a hollow paper doll. Had anyone inserted a hand inside it, it would come out holding nothing but air (171).

Before encountering Amina and Cathy in AlHussain, Mariam is a deeply troubled woman who harbors a profound aversion toward her own body and life. Her thoughts are incessantly consumed by the complex relationships she had with her mother and her second husband Raouf, offering her no solace except for the fleeting, albeit meaningful, connection she shared with her late first husband, Nagy. Her disillusionment extends to the entire healthcare system in Egypt, especially concerning mental and psychological disorders. She even ridicules the notion that her country could be recognized for tourism initiatives centered on mental health.

She bears the weight of her domineering mother's influence, the sudden loss of her beloved first husband Nagy, and the cruelty she

endured at the hands of her second husband. This burden is compounded by her sense of helplessness in the face of the mental and psychological ailments afflicting her patients at the government hospital, where support is scarce. This frustration persists even in her private clinic, prompting her to eventually abandon her psychiatry practice. The rapid degradation of nature in Cairo in 2010 further isolates Mariam, leading her to confine herself to her apartment, shuttering her clinic, and venturing outside only when necessary.

Mariam is haunted by her past to such an extent that she experiences recurring nightmares involving her mother and second husband. She candidly acknowledges that even after studying medicine and realizing her mother's psychopathic nature, her hatred for her mother endured. She feared that upon her own death, she would share a family tomb with her mother. Throughout the novel, painful memories from her traumatic childhood continually resurface, illustrating how her mother subjected her to torment and emotional neglect. After encountering Amina, Mariam finds herself inevitably comparing the two women—one as a biological mother devoid of maternal emotions, and the other as the embodiment of nurturing and care.

The initial appearance of Raouf occurs within Mariam's nightmare, wherein she feels as though she is drowning. In this dream, she observes him "walking like a peacock, surrounded by a group of men moving as though they were a diplomatic party on their way to a formal dinner."⁽⁹¹⁾ The symbolism of the peacock paints him as arrogant and self-absorbed. Mariam recollects how she spent eight agonizing years in a secret marriage with Raouf, who was unwilling to relinquish his affluent wife and the lucrative business associated with her influential family. Despite her predicament of being trapped with heavy stones binding her feet as she drowned in the dream, she consciously chose not to seek his assistance:

I will not give him the pleasure of coming like a noble knight to my rescue. Enough of eight years of disgust. I agreed that we should meet secretly, to live like a thief, and he refused to give me what I wanted. "A child means marriage, Mariam, and you know me. I will not do that. I did not lie to you." Years passed between

trickery and quarrels, and she ended up hating him and hating herself. (91)

It is not a mere coincidence that Raouf, Mariam's second husband and the catalyst for her depression and withdrawal from life, turns out to be Amina's grandson. Raouf, a wealthy businessman, is essentially a modern-day reflection of his grandfather SiElsaid. To him, Mariam represents a source of physical pleasure that he intends to keep as long as possible, regardless of her profound unhappiness and lack of fulfillment in their secret marriage. He insists that he loves her, but his perspective remains self-centered and pragmatic, making it difficult for him to grasp Mariam's genuine love for him. Above all, Mariam yearned to have a child with him and made repeated attempts to persuade him, but he adamantly refused. After eight years, she found herself alone. This arrogant and selfish behavior mirrors that of his grandfather, Si ElSayed. Sahar Elmougy appears to be somewhat pessimistic about the potential for a shift in patriarchal mentality, believing that the onus for change rests squarely on women themselves.

Mariam's overweight body becomes a symbol she humorously names "Sayed Keshta," likening it to a hippopotamus—a colossal, indolent creature that revels in eating and does little else. She remains confined within the chaos of her untidy and dusty home until the sudden decision referred to in the beginning propels her to AlHussain, where she pumps into Amina and Cathy, who have recently arrived after surviving the storm near the Sirens House.

Under Amina's attentive care, Mariam's health improves markedly. Amina initiates a transformation by tending to the house, nurturing the plants, and infusing the space with a sense of home for herself, Mariam, and Cathy. Amina forms bonds not only with the women but also with all the objects around her, from spice jars to sepertaya, mugs, and rugs. As harmony envelops their environment, a newfound energy emerges, unleashing untapped potential for all three characters.

Conclusion

Throughout the novel, Elmougy draws a compelling connection between the destinies of her characters and the state of their environment. She appears to assert that the ideology that legitimizes the oppression of women is fundamentally the same ideology that permits various forms of environmental degradation. She suggests that healing these women is not fundamentally different from the process of rejuvenating a neglected natural world. These themes align closely with the core principles of ecofeminism. Elmougy's narrative transcends time and place, effortlessly merging reality and imagination. The stories of the three characters, hailing from different eras and locations, are gracefully interwoven into a single narrative that blends their diverse experiences, personalities, and circumstances even before they cross paths. The novel delves deeply into existential inquiries, exploring the potential alternative life trajectories that might have unfolded had Amina, Catherine, and Mariam not been confined by the rigid boundaries of societal norms and hierarchies.

Sahar Elmougy's *The Hill's Musk* stands as a powerful expression of cultural/spiritual ecofeminism. In her reimagining of classic female characters, Elmougy skillfully replaces the oppressive cultural contexts of their original works with an ethic of sisterhood and reverence for all life forms, giving birth to narratives of healing, transformation, and empowerment to each of them according to her condition and background and preferences.

Elmougy constructs an idyllic ecofeminist haven within the novel, a sanctuary where women and nature flourish, sheltered from patriarchal oppression. This harmonious coexistence serves as a backdrop for profound introspection, exploring alternate life trajectories unburdened by societal norms and allowing close and interactive connection to nature which plays a great role in the process of transformation. Even in the bustling city of Cairo, the characters retain a sense of peace forged within the nurturing embrace of their ecofeminist haven. Healing, transformation and empowerment emerge as central themes, intertwined with the characters' deep connections with each other and their natural surroundings. Through solidarity and mutual support, the novel underscores the transformative power of unity and cooperation, echoing core ecofeminist values. Elmougy's narrative framework, set against a pristine natural environment, facilitates the characters' evolution and liberation from patriarchal constraints. This unconventional space serves

**Reimagining Woman–Nature Relationships: Healing, Transformation, and
Empowerment in Sahar Elmougy's "Misk Attal" (The Hill's Musk)**

as a catalyst for their journeys of self-discovery, healing, and empowerment, while forging profound connections with the natural world.

The Hill's Musk also delves into the intersection of patriarchal society and environmental exploitation, highlighting the intertwined oppression of women and nature. The novel encourages a shift in consciousness that values all life forms, fostering harmony with nature and respect for women as fundamental principles of a transformed and sustainable world. At core, Sahar Elmougy's novel encapsulates the essence of cultural/spiritual ecofeminism, weaving together narratives of empowerment, healing, and environmental consciousness, offering a poignant testament to the enduring strength of unity, cooperation, and the interconnectedness of all life.

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Notes

¹ The title of the paper is "Taha Hussein's Doaa Al Karawan Revisited in the Light of Ecofeminism".