

## PARSING ECOFEMINIST TRAITS IN DORIS LESSING NOVEL, 'THE CLEFT'

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### ABSTRACT

Women and Nature are inseparable entities. Both have similar characteristics and traits. Both are powerful and play a vital role in the evolution of mankind. Without them, there is no life on this planet. But the most ironical feature is that though both women and nature are powerful and vital for everything, are subjugated, oppressed and exploited. Women, though provided with freedom to have everything at their own interests including childbirth couldn't enjoy and are finally reduced to a playful object and exploited in the hands of males. Ecofeminism views the conditions of women and nature and equates the treatment of women to the destruction of nature. The novel, 'The cleft; by Doris Lessing illustrates the above said observation and this paper attempts to analyze this context through the lens of Ecofeminism'. The reading and re-reading of the novel helps in understanding the ecofeminist concept of viewing women and nature on the same scale in a better level. Moreover,, this paper also attempts to juxtapose the position and role of women of 21<sup>st</sup> century especially the blacks, with that the women portrayed in the novel, 'The Cleft' and also tries to extract how the traits of Ecofeminism is projected in a naïve way.

### Keywords:

Ecofeminism, women, childbirth, freedom, cleft, nature, position

### INTRODUCTION

The world has given birth to many luminaries who with their literary skills create miracles with their pens, which could never be imagined, They revert to present some peculiar and spurious ideas through their unique style of thinking. Their flow of thought is so intense, severe and reverberating that the entire world turns upon them in awe for their thoughts & appreciate their exceptional expressions. It's not one or two to mention, but many in the world of literature Ms. Dorris May Lessing. Born in Iran, brought up in Rhodesia and settling in London, Lessing herself is an mongrelisation of all the cultures and heritage. All these impressions can be witnessed in all her works, creating great impact on the minds of the readers. Some of her well known works are *The Golden Notebook*, *The Grass is singing*, *Children of Violence*, *The Good Terrorist*, *The cleft* etc. She was awarded the nobel prize for her outstanding contribution to literature in 2007. It is interesting to note that Dorris Lessing, gave birth to 'The Cleft', in the same year, (2007). In this work, the female writer extols the origin of human species in a peculiar way, deconstructing the known notion that woman is born out of man, Of human genesis and Reproduction, the natural copulation of male and female involving childbirth. Being a women, she proceeds through this novel, giving due credit to the female gender portraying that they are the 'primal human stock'(Lessing) for the creation of human species on earth. The novel, '*The Cleft*', involves the narration by a Roman Senator tracing out an eldritch fact that man is born out of woman. The novel involves nature and women as the major content and character responsible for all things occurring in the story. This point made us to explore this work from the perspective of Ecofeminism, as this literary theory foregrounds only on women and nature and its related features. This paper examines how Dorris Lessing has projected the traits of Ecofeminism without actually being an 'Ecofeminist', rather. Further, this novel beautifully shows the bonding of nature and women and the 'Roaring inside her', the words of Susan Griffin, 'when the first monster was born and how they face a maelstrom when the first monster came in to their life...Not for ever, of course, but it was a terrible thing, the moment when a Monster appeared at the moment of giving birth. (The Cleft:13). In Ecofeminism we can see that it is one of the nascent literary thoughts gaining attention these days. Besides giving feminine attributes to nature, probing into the close connection and relationship