



A Kaleidoscopic view of



Eco-Feminism in Literature



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Edited By
Smt.N.Vasanthi

**A Kaleidoscopic view of
Ecofeminism in Contemporary
Literature**

EDITOR

Smt. N. Vasanthi

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FOREWORD

*I took the less travelled road
And that has made all the difference*

Robert Frost

These lines, which I often cherish, reveal my intention, purpose for the publication of the book and gives clarification for those ambiguous and inquisitive readers. Truly, this book stands as an illustration to the above lines containing research papers of different scholars, faculties and eminent persons of English on the '*the less travelled theory*', '**Ecofeminism**'. As a faculty in English and as a counterpart of this Gender, namely *feminine*, I had some special focus and interest on this topic and this drive made me to invite scholars and faculty in English to intensify that, with their views. This book is a verbal presentation of the proceedings of the one day national webinar organized on 11th of August, 2022 at SGK GOVT DEGREE COLLEGE, Vinukonda, Palnadu district, on the topic "**ECOFEMINISM INCONTEMPORARY LITERATURE**". It is a maiden step made by the Dept of English of the college to bring all the stakeholders of English under the canopy of Ecofeminism. Though we all know the etymological meaning of the term '**Ecofeminism**' as an essence dealing with the relationship of nature and women in line with male domination and patriarchy, a sincere attempt was made to bring all the scholars under this *ecofeminist* canopy, paving way to witness and enjoy a kaleidoscopic view of this literary theory through their eyes their perceptions, their notions, their approaches, their perfections, their dynamics, thereby examining and exploring this nascent literary theory. This book encompasses the myriad views of the scholars on Ecofeminism in contemporary literature, running from Elizabethan age to modern period, showcasing their ideas through papers on what Ecofeminism meant for them.

Ecofeminism needs to be explored, discovered, invented, fuelled and ignited to enlighten not only women, Nature, culture & literature but the entire planet, to put in the words of Judi Bari's phrase '*Earth first*'..

I extend my sincere thanks to all the contributors, for their sheer support and knowledge and encouraging my maiden attempt and Endeavour to achieve success in this project and shall gratefully be acknowledged. Incidentally, I extend my solemn gratitude to our Principal, Dr.K.Srinivasa Rao and to all my colleagues, by every name, for making me stand with pride through this book.

I am deeply grateful to the *Almighty* for endowing me the strength physically, intellectually, emotionally and spiritually, without which nothing would have been possible.

Any suggestions, recommendations or modifications, partially or directly, to ameliorate this edition is solemnly welcomed.

Hope to pursue this Endeavour with the same spirit, zeal & perseverance in future.....

I thank all of you.

Smt. N. Vasanthi
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MESSAGE

It gives me immense pleasure to write foreword to this book edited by Smt. N.Vasanthi, Asst Professor of English. First of all I would like to congratulate the Department of English, S.G.K. Government Degree College, Vinukonda, Palnadu District for conducting National Level Webinar on Ecofeminism and for compiling all the papers presented in the webinar into this book. Efforts of the editor as well as the authors of all papers were evident to me while going through this book

The theory of Ecofeminism is nascent nowadays and the Department has taken an initiative to explore deeper into this theory. The relationship of women with nature, their similarities, their overlappings, their oppression going hand in hand is brought into lime light through the theory of Ecofeminism. Both women and nature are viewed in a wider context and is curious enough to look into this concept in a myriad ways from different stakeholders in this field and this book acted as a platform to present their views and welcome new innovative thoughts, perceptions and nuances in this literary theory.

I believe, this book decently gives an opportunity to the reader to know about Ecofeminism, its genesis, its ideas, concepts, notions at the rudimentary level. It also enables to understand how this concept is applied and explored in various contemporary works of English Literature. The sources of this theory dating back from the Roman period and even before are clearly explained. Further the application of the theory in different literary works presented by the authors was highly interesting and informative. The comparison of trivial things like blossoming of flowers and withering of leaves, Bonsai trees, clouds and every phenomenon of nature with the life of women is extremely spell-bound and striking. The life of women and her journey from cradle to grave compared with phenomena of nature demanded attention. I believe that the proceedings of the webinar on 11th of August shall resume the same flavour and aroma through this book and shall be cherished and enjoyed by all who read this book. Further, I firmly believe that this edition shall provide valuable inputs to the reader, who tries to explore the theory of Ecofeminism.

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Chapter - 1

REFLECTIONS OF ECO-FEMINISM IN CONTEMPORARY WOMEN'S WRITINGS

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Literary theory has emerged as one of the important considerations in the present-day research. It has become necessary, sometimes mandatory to go through the theories to connect our research and make it meaningful, because, whatever has been proposed in the theory is not an overnight outcome but is based on long-standing studies, observations and interpretations.

Literary theory, in general, examines the relations between writers, texts and the world. In most of the literary theory 'the world' is synonymous with society-the social sphere. Ecocriticism expands the notion of the 'world' to include the entire ecosphere.

Eco-criticism has emerged as one of the most significant literary theories and a literary tool in the literary horizon or academia after feminism and post-colonialism. It came into existence in 1990 while exploring the relationship between nature and literature. The objectives of the study involved the exploration of the ecological values and the perceptions of human beings with regard to the environment. Andrew Stables defines eco criticism as "a literary study through green lens." It is seeing nature as ecology and the study of literature and environment from an inter-disciplinary point of view, where literature scholars analyse texts that illustrate environmental concerns and examine various ways literature treats the subject of nature. It takes an interdisciplinary approach by analysing the works of authors, researchers and poets in the context of environmental issues and nature. To put it in the simplest, "eco criticism is a name that implies ecological literacy".

Eco-critic is a person "who judges the merits and faults of writing that depict the effects of culture upon nature, with a view toward celebrating nature's berating its despoilers, and reversing their harm through political action."

There isn't any correct and clear-cut answer to the following questions:

- What is nature?
- Where is man's place in nature?

- Does nature only exist for man's needs?
- How can we define nature today considering ecological disasters?
- What is the contribution of literature or literary studies to ecology?

The idea of ecocriticism appeared to natural crises such as Pollution, global warming. Over pollution, waste disposal and nuclear disposal, climate change, deforestation, ozone layer depletion, etc. Glot Felty, one of the pioneers of eco-criticism, in introduction to "The Ecocriticism Reader" (1996), an important anthology of American ecocriticism defines ecocriticism, "Ecocriticism is the study of relationship between literature and physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender conscious perspective, Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies."

Eco- feminism has been emerged as the most important off shoot of both eco-criticism and feminism in the recent times. It is the feminist approach to environmental ethics. Eco-feminists believe that there are inter-connections between the oppression of women through sexism, racism, classicism, ageism, colonialism, naturism (domination of nature). Eco-feminism is a specific lens of viewing feminism. Eco-feminists see the intrinsic connection between woman and nature as nature and woman go synonymous. Woman is identified with nature, being called 'Prakriti' attributing femininity to it. Contrary to it, nature is ransacked, molested, exploited, and commercialized for man's benefits. In the same manner, a woman also undergoes the same for the pleasures of men. The contentions of eco-feminists are;

- The earth is matriarchal; however, society is driven by men.
- Earth and women both lack respect

Eco-feminism sees the issues of social justice as linked with environmental issues. Hence, the pertinent questions put forth by eco-feminists on par with the concerns of eco-critics about nature, are;

- What is culture?
- What is a woman's place in culture or society?
- Does woman exist only for man's pleasures?
- How can we define her place in contemporary times considering the atrocities on women?
- What is the contribution of literature or literary studies to depict a woman's place and the intrinsic connection between woman and nature?

The above concerns are very well expressed by the woman authors in the literatures written either in English or in the regional languages and in different genres also. Just as eco-critics deal with exploitation of nature and its resources, eco-feminists voice the issues of women's sexual exploitation, gender discrimination, sexual politics, work place harassment, rapes, body shaming, molestation, emotional blackmail, so on and so forth...

**“If you are pruning your child’s dreams
You are just making a bonsai brain”**

The above lines speak volumes about the truth how the parents try to make the minds of their children, girl child in particular, to become very small like a bonsai tree. Bonsai trees are subject to pruning, root reduction, potting, defoliation and grafting. Just like these trees, women are restricted from reaching their full potential. In the same manner, nature is not allowed to grow and is occupied for commercial purposes. The metaphor of the bonsai tree is symbolizing women and their roles in society. Nature is not allowed to grow just as the same with women, who are not allowed to grow rationally, intellectually and socially.

“A Work of Artifice” by the American poet, Marge Piercy, is a small poem about a large subject. The poem describes how a bonsai tree, which in nature has the potential to grow into its enormous height, is instead carefully pruned so that it becomes something a miniature, a mere, tiny glimpse of its potential self. She writes;

**The Bonsai tree
In the attractive pot
could have grown eighty feet tall
on the side of a mountain
till split by lightning.**

**But a gardener
Carefully pruned it
It is nine inches high.**

The poem is about the social limitations of women. She shows how women are conditioned to live a limited life. The poem's central theme is the oppression of women through the vivid imagery of the bonsai tree, and the trickery and coaxing of the gardener;

**Every day as he whittles back the branches
The gardener croons
It is your nature**

**To be small and cosy,
Domestic and weak;
How lucky, little tree,
To have a pot to grow in.**

The poet compares the lives of women in society with bonsais. By whittling back, the branches of bonsai tree, the gardener prevents the tree from reaching its full growth and symbolically expresses the opportunities kept away from women in society and the suppression of reaching their capabilities. Just as the tree is lucky to get a pot to be placed in women also should feel happy that they are under the protection of men, losing their own identity. They are systematically marginalised by making them believe whatever is said is right. The bonsai tree in the poem is a potent symbol and represents several things. It represents oppression of women, their inability to grow and how society has kept them tied to ancient customs. This hold of social customs on women is so strong that releasing them will require fierce force and empowerment. This poem reflects the artificial construction of identities in the society hence the title 'A Work Artifice'.

Bonsai, a plant that needs continuous trimming is compared to a person who trims or scales down the love that she gives to see its perfect form. The poet wants to give a message that the presence of a few trees or plants inside our home does not become equal to nature. It is a very false idea of nature. Real nature is outside, in the forests we have destroyed.

"Bonsai Life" is a short story written by Abburi Chayadevi with eco-feministic perspectives. This story is a plea for educating women, there by freeing them from their "bonsai life". The central theme in the story is about women's independence and self-reliance. The writer urges that the women should get education and should be able to stand on their own feet, citing the fact that the economic dependency is one of the main reasons for the subjugation of women. By creating two women characters, one educated and the other as an uneducated in the same family the story brings out the contrasting status of the two sisters. Both bonsai and housewife are delicate and are not allowed to grow to their full potential. A bonsai tree is limited to a pot; similarly, a housewife is confined to her home. Bonsai tree is used as a metaphor for a housewife in this story reflecting the fact that many lives of many women are like a bonsai life not being allowed any growth.

"Laburnum for My Head" is yet another short story written by Temsula Ao, one of the most acclaimed writers from North East India. This story can be seen as a perfect example for the ecological consciousness as well as eco-feministic concerns. The story records the main character, Lentina's obsession with the idea of growing Laburnum trees on her grave instead of having a grave stone. She desires her body to be placed in

the grave beside the laburnum trees so that she would be enjoying the beauty of buttery yellow blossoms at least after her death. This is because of her futile attempts to grow the laburnum trees in the premises of her house. Her longing to be buried in the lap of nature shows how she wants to attain immortal stature through nature. The story also brings out the materialistic attitude of people in their relationships and how they are moving away from nature.

Temsula Ao's eco-feminist perspective is seen in Lentina's love for plants and flowers and to have laburnum trees instead of a headstone at her grave. Her wish to become a part of nature even after her death is an eco-feminist way of thinking. "Go green" is one of the slogans of being eco-friendly and to save the environment from pollution. Ao in this story, draws attention to "green thinking," (Bate xvii) which is very much needed in the present day to minimize the global warming due to which the natural resources are being depleted. Human civilization has always been in the business of altering the land, whether through deforestation or urbanization or mining or enclosure or even the artificial imposition of 'nature' through landscaping".

Lentina buys the land near the cemetery, plants the laburnums, and sees the growth and dies when they are blooming. It was the end of an ordinary woman who cherished her dream of having a laburnum for her head, instead of the customary practice of erecting headstones. Her dream came true and the entire graveyard was filled no more with headstones, but blooming laburnum, hibiscus, gardenia, bottle-brush, camellia, and oleander at the various seasons of the year.. In the story the protagonist makes her dream of immortality come true through Laburnum blossoms, representing transience of life. Through this story Temsula Ao unveils the hidden but intricate relationship between women and nature. The laburnum flowers appealed to Lentina because of their beauty and also because she 'attributed humility' to their gesture of hanging their heads to earthward and that is what she calls the 'femininity' of these flowers. So, at last women and humble nature are seen to integrate themselves into some extraordinary permanence, 'something extraordinary' which displays its glory of "buttery-yellow splendor every May!" Ao's story would surely enhance our love and respect for nature and help us realize the strength of women as protectors of nature.

Surfacing is a novel written by a Canadian, Margaret Atwood, a multi-faceted literary personality. This novel is nothing but a feminist treatise with an anti-Americanism that traces out anti-nature attitude of individuals. Eco-feminist perspectives are amply seen in this novel. The protagonist is not given any name signifying any other woman who becomes the victim of patriarchal tendencies. She falls in love with her Art Master, becomes pregnant but he forces her to go for termination saying that he is already married and has two kids. While searching for her missing father in island of Quebec

the narrator observes the mutilation of nature by the American tourists who sport with animals and dumping the lake. When she drowns in water and comes to the surface she realizes her mistake of aborting the foetus conceived out of wed-lock. She feels that she is also anti-nature in doing so. Finally, she wants to re-embrace nature by taking a bold decision of getting pregnancy through Joe, her colleague and admirer. Later she would reject his proposal of marriage and bring up the child on her own. This novel also stands as icon of eco-feminist perspectives.

Contemporary women's writings are loaded with many issues of women and nature across cultures, nations and universal. Susan Griffin writes;

**"We are the birds, eggs, flowers
Butterflies, rabbits, cows, sheep
We are women.
We rise from the wave
We are women and nature.
And he says he cannot hear
Us speak. But we hear."**

The affirmative and assertive tone of the women can be heard in the above lines. Needless to say that the waves of feminism have given them to voice their anguish to reach out to any man who thinks low of any woman?

"Nature has a value that cannot be reduced to its usefulness to culture, and woman has a value that cannot be reduced to her usefulness to man," the apt lines spoken by Susan Griffin reflect the paramount value of both nature and woman and their intricate relationship.

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Chapter - 2

ECOFEMINISM IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE: AN OVERVIEW

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Romantic poets adored nature and solemnized it in various aspects. The romantic poets touched the anguish and distress of the spirit and every scene of natural beauty. They substituted love, emotions, imagination, and beauty. But with the arrival of industrial revolution, in the name of development many changes have occurred: massive deforestation, mass animal killing, environmental pollution, soil erosion and many more, leading to ecological imbalance and environmental hazards. Consequently many –isms have evolved in literary arena. And Ecofeminism is one of them.

Ecofeminism is a combination of ecology and feminism. It is an activist and academic movement expressing concern for both nature and women, at the same time it explores their interlinkage, the interconnectedness of the human and the non-human world. It is not merely an academic theory rather it has emerged from political, philosophical and social movements. The exponents of the movement claim that women and nature are exploited by the male-dominant system and that; environmental problems and women's issues are interrelated. That is, as the patriarchal order continues to exploit nature, discrimination against women will also persist. Similarly, as long as the sex segregation continues, the exploitation of nature will go on.

Her Excellency, the newly elected President of India, Smt Droupadi Murmu, in her speech during her swearing-in ceremony has highlighted how the women in the rural area lead their lives very close to nature. Their daily chore is integrated with nature. Time has come when we need to analyze the impact of environmental or ecological degradation on women. Discrimination of women, particularly oppression and subjugation of women by men, more prominently in developing countries is a matter of

discussion of feminists. It is the first wave and the development has led us to the third wave, ecofeminism.

Ecofeminism as a term was first coined by the French thinker Françoise d'Eaubonne in her book *Le Féminisme ou la Mor* in 1974. According to her, ecofeminism relates the subjugation and domination of all marginalized groups (women, people of colour, children, and poor) to the subjugation and domination of nature (animals, land, water, air, etc.). In the book, the author argues that oppression, domination, exploitation, and colonization from the Western patriarchal society have directly led to irretrievable ecological damage. Françoise d'Eaubonne was an activist and organizer, and her writing promoted the obliteration of all social injustice. This was hailed as the third wave of feminism. The first wave dealt with bringing into notice the physical suffering of the women, which lasted from the nineteenth century to the early twentieth century, whereas the second wave focused on the issues working in the direction to remove the issues of the First wave and getting rights for women and it began in 1960s. The theory was further developed by Ynestra King in 1976. According to this theory, the patriarchal societies in western society create a male-centred culture, and through this culture impose social hierarchies and dualities. Karen J. Warren gives a vivid picture of a social hierarchy where the hierarchies and dualities give superiority to men, subduing non-male beings. For instance, dualities such as male/female, white/black, culture/nature, West/East, heaven/earth, human/animal, strong/weak, soul/body, mind/emotion are put forward to create hierarchies which result in an unequal order in society and enforce a superior/inferior relationship. Thus, while the former is dominant, the latter is subordinate. The hierarchical orders that generalize binary concepts enable men to be the primary sex while making women the second sex. Similarly, this order also causes culture to overpower nature. While culture, intellect and powerfulness are considered as superior features representing men, nature, emotions and powerlessness being identified as inferior properties, and they are attributed to women. And thus, a link between women and nature is drawn. Therefore, in male-dominant societies, women and nature exist as inferior, lower and subordinate beings. The system oppresses both, resulting in the interlinking of women's issues and environmental problems. And ecofeminists aim to unshackle and liberate women and nature from the domination of the male-supremacy. Ecofeminists draw a connecting link between women and nature in culture, religion, literature and iconography, and address the parallels between the oppression of nature and women as the same. Men see women and nature as property. At the same time, they assert men as the curators of culture and women as the curators of nature. But the Ecofeminists emphasize that both women and nature must be respected. They give both of them the same rank. One must not dominate the other rather one must have respect for the other.

It is because of the reproductive system that woman is treated as inferior. Taking them to be dependent they are treated as domestic slaves. They are supposed to be meant for

cooking and cleaning, giving birth to children and nurturing. The pangs of women in underdeveloped countries are beyond imagination. They are supposed to fetch water and firewood, food and other household necessities covering long distances from home to the jungle. Therefore, the ecofeminism movement aims to unshackle them from the coercion in third-world countries. Furthermore, the male dominance also treats animals as sources of money; therefore by killing and commodifying animals, men gain supremacy. There is no denying the fact that, humans exploit animals because they perceive animals as inferior beings. And therefore, Ecofeminists argue for vegetarian and vegan food. The concept of ecofeminism applied to preserve animal rights has led to a new concept: vegetarian ecofeminism, which asserts that "omitting the oppression of animals from feminist and ecofeminist analyses [...] is inconsistent with the activist and philosophical foundations of both feminism (as a "movement to end all forms of oppression") and ecofeminism."¹ Many ecofeminists believe that "meat-eating is a form of patriarchal domination...that suggests a link between male violence and a meat-based diet."² During a 1995 interview on the Issues, Carol J. Adams stated, "Manhood is constructed in our culture in part by access to meat-eating and control of other bodies, whether it's women or animals".³ According to Adams, "We cannot work for justice and challenge the oppression of nature without understanding that the most frequent way we interact with nature is by eating animals".⁴

There are several sub-branches of ecofeminism, including vegetarian ecofeminism, spiritual ecofeminism, and materialist ecofeminism. But at the root all of them assert the masculine dominance which has led to a disconnection between nature and culture, which has adversely affected marginalized groups as well as nature itself.

1. Nature ecofeminism: Nature is also addressed by some as Mother Nature. The earth is to humans as mothers to an infant. We have to depend upon nature for food, drink, comfort, and love. The earth is a necessity for humans for existence, but our existence is not essential for the Earth. There are historical interconnections between women and nature that have been transformative and pervade today's mainstream morals and observations. We don't have a term "Father Nature" which proves that innately Nature is associated with women—specifically a mother. Globalization and rapid Industrialization are using up earth's resources rapidly, but due to lack of political willpower for solving the environmental problems is leading the world to unseen devastation. Most of the Developed countries benefit heavily by using natural resources, in the form of oil, minerals etc. But the question arises: Why are the developed nations acting rather feebly and not being environmental leaders? India is playing a vital role in mitigating the adverse effects of ecological imbalance on nature. The United Nations has declared the decade 2021-2030 as the Decade of Ecosystem Restoration. The

officials of the United Nations Environment Programme said in India, ecosystem restoration could also form the basis of post-COVID recovery.

Further, ecosystem renovation and transformation for India is not only about protecting its ecosystems and biodiversity or justifying the impacts of crises going on at a global scale; it provides solutions to the challenges of food and water security and of securing the livelihoods and the well-being of millions in the country. Nearly half of India's 1.3 billion people are directly dependent on agriculture and forests, with approximately 20 per cent, including indigenous communities, women and marginal farmers dependent on forest resources. Approximately 10 million Indians have lost their jobs during the second wave and during the post-COVID scenario, investing in the restoration of the ecosystem has become more essential in addressing the rising unemployment rates and falling household incomes. While conventional strategies in crisis recovery often deprioritize nature conservation, generally looked upon as a complementary goal, nature conservation and restoration are not opposing goals but rather serve as a long-term vision for society and for economies. Ecosystem restoration can only happen if all stakeholders are involved in the process.

2. Socialist ecofeminism: Ecofeminist theory does not consider women as subordinates, but rather asserts an egalitarian, mutual society in which no group dominates the other. Of now, there are several branches of ecofeminism, with varying approaches and analyses, including liberal ecofeminism, spiritual/cultural ecofeminism, and social/socialist ecofeminism (or materialist ecofeminism. Marxist ecofeminists differ from the ecofeminists in the point that women's connection to nature is rooted in their reproductive biology. The essentialism of some strands of ecofeminism leads us down a path of biological determinism that so much of second-wave feminism was fighting to destroy, and we are still struggling against. We also need to reckon with the revolution in the gender/sex binary demanded by Trans, intersex, and gender non-conforming people who do not and will not fit into the simple male/female categories and all the cultural baggage that goes with it. According to an American ecofeminist philosopher Carolyn Merchant "Social ecofeminism advocates the liberation of women through overturning economic and social hierarchies that turn all aspects of life into a market society that today even invades the womb".⁵ And thus, ecofeminism seeks to abolish social hierarchies which favour the production of commodities (dominated by men) over biological and social reproduction.

3. Vegetarian ecofeminism: Vegetarian ecofeminists have a strong belief that all types of oppression are interlinked. They express concern for the domination of humans over nature, the environment and nonhuman animals. Vegetarian ecofeminism extends beyond ecofeminism in the sense that it believes that humans exploit and kill nonhuman animals which should be distinctly recognized and viewed. The concept of speciesism is central to distinguishing between vegetarian ecofeminism and ecofeminism, and it strongly links the hierarchies created among nonhuman animals to the hierarchies created among humans.

But speciesism for the Humanists is not a "bad -ism" like racism or sexism, because nonhuman animals are not moral humans like women, people of colour, and any other group of oppressed humans and therefore they don't deserve the same rights. Exponents and supporters of humanism strongly opine that the domination of humans over animals is justified, and animals are indeed meant for human consumption. According to vegetarian ecofeminism, human rights are inherently more significant than animal rights because their biological differences from human make them morally different as well. On the other hand, Vegetarian Ecofeminists disagree with this view and assert that there is an inherent bond between humans and nonhuman animals, and the human supremacy and degradation of animals results in a social construction meant to undermine the human-animal bond. It is in fact not the characteristic of an abnormal few who care and empathize with nonhuman animals, but the normal state for most humans.

4. Spiritual Ecofeminism/Cultural Ecofeminism: Another branch of ecofeminism is spiritual or cultural ecofeminism, which is popular among authors like Starhawk, Riane Eisler, Carol J. Adams, and more. It is termed an earth-based spirituality by Starhawk. The theory recognizes that the Earth is alive, and that we are interconnected as parts of a community. Spiritual ecofeminism is not linked to one specific religion, but is centered on human and moral values of love, sympathy, caring, compassion, and non-violence. The ancient tradition of worship of Gaia, the Goddess of nature and spirituality (also known as Mother Earth) is central to spiritual or cultural feminism. Wicca and Paganism are dominant to spiritual ecofeminism. Wicca group has a deep respect for nature which aims at establishing strong community values. Spiritual ecofeminism has been described as "cultural ecofeminism" by Carolyn Merchant in her book *Radical Ecology*. According to Merchant, cultural ecofeminism "celebrates the relationship between women and nature through the revival of ancient rituals centered on goddess worship, the moon, animals, and the female reproductive system."⁶ And thus, cultural ecofeminists tend to value intuition, an ethic of caring, and human-nature interrelationships.

5. Transformative ecofeminism: Noted environmentalist, ecofeminist and food sovereignty advocate, most often referred to as "Gandhi of grain" for her activism associated with the anti-GMO (Genetically Modified Organisms) movement Vandana Shiva says that women have a special connection to the environment through their daily interactions but this connection has been ignored. She professes that, women in subsistence economies who produce "wealth in partnership with nature, have been experts in their own right of holistic and ecological knowledge of nature's processes". She makes the point that "these alternative modes of knowing, which are oriented to the social benefits and sustenance needs are not recognized by the capitalist reductionist paradigm, because it fails to perceive the interconnectedness of nature, or the connection of women's lives, work and knowledge with the creation of wealth (23)".⁷ According to Shiva this failure is the consequence of the Western patriarchal perceptions of development and progress. She further asserts that, it is the patriarchy which has labeled women, nature, and other groups not growing the economy as "unproductive".

In addition to outlining the theoretical aspects of the ecofeminist critique American Philosophers Greta Gaard and Lori Gruen outline a wealth of data and statistics in an essay entitled "Ecofeminism: Toward Global Justice and Planetary Health" (1993). The intention behind outlining "ecofeminist framework" is to establish ways of presentation and understanding the current global scenario for better understanding to arrive at a point to ameliorate the ills.

There are many ecological concerns that we have been encountering, every now and then, like global warming, depletion of forests, climate change, loss of biodiversity,

environmental pollution, global sea-level rise and ocean acidification which collectively give rise to a consciousness to the serious threat to ecology. And it has led to environmental movements in all nooks and corners of the world. All environmentalists argue that everyone should have respect for the environment but they differ in the point of their reason behind the respect depending upon the kinds of environmentalism. Various kinds of environmental movements have evolved so far:

i. Deep Ecology: An environmental movement and philosophy with the core principle that the living environment as a whole has the same right to live and flourish as humanity. Deep ecologists assert that the survival of any part in the ecosystem is dependent upon the well-being of the whole, and criticize the narrative of human supremacy. Deep ecology presents an eco-centric (earth-centred) view, rather than the anthropocentric (human-centred) view, developed in its most recent form by philosophers of the Enlightenment, such as Newton, Bacon, and Descartes. Advocates of deep ecology counter the narrative that man is separate from nature, is in charge of nature, or is the steward of nature, or that nature exists as a resource to be freely exploited. They cite the fact that indigenous peoples who are marginalized under-exploited their environment and retained a sustainable society for thousands of years, as evidence that human societies are not necessarily destructive by nature. The term "Deep Ecology" was coined by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss in an article in 1973 when stressing the need to move beyond superficial responses to the social and ecological problems we face. Deep ecology is termed itself as 'deep' because it moves beyond superficial responses and believes in asking deeper questions concerning 'why' and 'how'. As an ideological platform, deep ecology has been adopted by the American radical group "Earth First!" known for spiking trees and staging theatrical protests against logging companies and the forest service.

Deep ecology emphasises on the damages of the ecological degradation to so-called "non-human" nature, in the form of decreased biodiversity, and the negative impact of excessive human presence on the habitat of other creatures and the biosphere as a whole. Deep ecology reflects a masculine viewpoint inasmuch as it focuses on the fortification of non-human nature often at the cost of poor humans who cannot afford to recycle or conserve.

ii. The Gaia theory also known as **Gaia hypothesis**, **Gaia paradigm**, or the **Gaia principle**, advocates that living organisms interact with their inorganic surroundings on the Earth to form a collaborative, self-regulating, and an elaborate system that helps to maintain and enable the conditions for life on the planet. The Gaia theory was propounded in 1970 by James Lovelock, a chemist and Lynn Margulis, a microbiologist. They proposed that the earth is a living being, self-regulating the

elements to sustain life on it. The theory was named as per the idea of the primordial goddess Gaia who personified the Earth in Greek mythology. Gaia, proposes that the earth is a living organism and human being is a part thereof. The organisms interact with the inorganic surrounding on the earth to form a synergistic, self-regulating, complex system. All these help to preserve and perpetuate the condition for life in the earth. Their work suggested that in the earth chemicals all “talk” to one another to protect life on the planet; the salt in the ocean is never too salinated, the oxygen in the atmosphere never too noxious, and the temperature of the earth never grows too hostile for life to thrive. All elements work in perfect harmony to ensure life on earth is sustained. And human being should not harm the living earth for his own benefit.

iii. Ecosophy: The term ‘Ecosophy’ was first coined by the French philosopher Félix Guattari and Arne Naess (the Norwegian father of deep ecology) in the 1970s. The theory upends the previously-held belief that Man is at the apex of the food chain. On the other hand, Ecosophy summarizes the understanding that, human beings are but a part of an intricate biodiversity, in which every living organism is inter-connected by delicate, invisible threads of co-existence, needed to create and sustain a vibrant, healthy planet. The basic principles of Buddhism, Jainism and Mahima Dharma are based upon the concept of non-violence which in turn is conducive to the principles of Ecosophy. Gandhiji’s evergreen words, “The Earth has enough for every man’s need but not enough for every man’s greed” is also based upon this philosophy. In a nut shell, Ecosophy is the philosophy of ecological balance.

Some must read books on ecofeminism. Here is a list of some books about ecofeminism to get a reader started with the theory:

1. Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development

Vandana Shiva’s “Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development” incorporates the understanding of ‘eco-feminism’ and talks about how, since a very long period, male-stream knowledge has disgraced and ignored fundamental feminist elucidation of existing models of ‘development’. This book plays a vital role in providing a close view on the unnoticed consequences of development and its relationship with ecology. Shiva deals with the ‘nature Vs culture’ debate (Ortner 1974) in her epoch making book Staying Alive: Women, Ecology, and Development. She addresses vividly the control of nature i.e. femininity by culture i.e. masculinity which has been rationalized and justified in the pretext of development. This, on the other hand, affects other social patterns and relationships including human beings and ecology. Shiva has vehemently

criticized the reductionist approach of development that results in centralization of control in the hands of patriarchy.

Shiva also has vividly explained various steps taken up by women in sustaining the ecology that unfortunately have remained unnoticed by male-stream understanding of various disciplines. Such discriminations are facilitated by the technocratic approach of modern science and the research conducted in this field. The debate around tradition and modernity where the discourse of development has prioritized latter, has led to the degradation of indigenous form of values and knowledge which played an important role in sustaining the relationship between ecology and mankind for a prolonged period.

2. **Ecofeminism** by Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva (1993). Vandana Shiva, a physicist with expertise in ecology and environmental policy and Marie Mies, a feminist social scientist, write about colonization, reproduction, biodiversity, food soil, sustainable development, and other issues. This epoch making book argues that ecological devastation and industrial disasters constitute a menace to everyday life, the maintenance of which has been made the particular responsibility of women. Throughout the world all the countries have been experiencing wars, violent ethnic chauvinisms as big questions for ecofeminists on the relationship between the patriarchal oppression and ecological devastation and the role of women in this regard. These two internationally acclaimed authors offer a thought-provoking analysis of many other such issues from a unique North-South perception. They look forward for the probability of movements advocating consumer liberation and subsistence production, sustainability and renewal, and argue for an acceptance of limits and reciprocity and a rejection of exploitation, the endless commoditization of needs, and violence. This groundbreaking work remains as relevant today as when it was first published.

3. **Woman and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her (1978)** By Susan Griffin

In this masterpiece feminist literature, Susan Griffin explores the identification of women with the earth - both as sustenance for humanity and as victim of male wrath. She has brilliantly analysed how patriarchal Western philosophy and religion have used language and science to strengthen their power over both women and nature. Griffin draws on multiple amazing sources in showing how destructive has been the impulse to segregate the human soul, and rejoining it with its origin. Poet Adrienne Rich calls *Woman and Nature* "perhaps the most extraordinary nonfiction work to have merged from the matrix of contemporary female consciousness--a fusion of patriarchal science,

ecology, female history and feminism, written by a poet who has created a new form for her vision. ...The book has the impact of a great film or a fresco; yet it is intimately personal, touching to the quick of woman's experience."

4. **Ecofeminism and the Sacred** (1993) edited by Carol Adams, a feminist-vegan-activist, is an extensive study of women, ecology, and ethics which includes topics such as Buddhism, Judaism, Shamanism, nuclear power plants, land in urban life and "Afrowomanism."

5. **Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What It Is and Why It Matters** (2000) by Karen J. Warren noted environmental feminist philosopher is an explanation of the key issues and arguments of ecofeminism.

6. **Ecological Politics: Ecofeminists and the Greens** (1998) by Greta Gaard, an American ecofeminist writer, scholar, activist, and documentary filmmaker, is an in-depth look at the parallel development of ecofeminism and the Green party in the United States.

7. **Fertile Ground: Women, Earth and the Limits of Control** (1994) by Irene Diamond is a provocative reexamination of the notion of "controlling" either the Earth or women's bodies.

8. **Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism** (1989) edited by Judith Plant is a collection exploring the link between women and nature with thoughts on mind, body, spirit and personal and political theory.

9. **Intimate Nature: The Bond Between Women and Animals** edited by Linda Hogan, Deena Metzger and Brenda Peterson (1997) A mix of stories, essays, and poems about animals, women, wisdom and the natural world from an array of women authors, scientists, and naturalists. Contributors include Daine Ackerman, Jane Godall, Barbara Kingsolver, and Ursula Le Guin.

10. **Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation** by Ivone Gebara (1999) A look at how and why ecofeminism is born from the day-to-day struggle to survive, particularly when some social classes suffer more than others. Topics include patriarchal epistemology, ecofeminist epistemology and "Jesus from an ecofeminist perspective."

11. **Refuge by Terry Tempest Williams** (1992) is a combination memoir and naturalist exploration that details the death of the author's mother from breast cancer along with the slow flooding that destroys an environmental bird sanctuary.

The world has progressed a lot in manifold spheres, materially and immaterially, in the thought process of the think tank. In spite of the significant changes, women still struggle to enjoy rights at par with their proportion in the world. Nature fails to utter. But human beings and other animals are encountering manifold challenges in day to day life as a consequence to the injustice to women and nature. Thus, to conclude, in the present global scenario, heard or unheard, all feelings need to be addressed consciously and with sensitivity. There lies the success of human life. And that is what all the religious and cultural philosophies have propounded.

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Chapter - 3

ECO-FEMINISM IN LITERATURE

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Abstract

The past few decades have witnessed an enormous interest in both the women's movement and the ecology (environmental) movement. Many feminists have argued that the goals of these two movements are mutually reinforcing; ultimately they involve the development of worldviews and practices that are not based on male-biased models of domination. As Rosemary Ruether wrote in 1975 in her book, *New Woman/New Earth*:

Women must see that there can be no liberation for them and no solution to the ecological crisis within a society whose fundamental model of relationships continues to be one of domination. They must unite the demands of the women's movement with those of the ecological movement to envision a radical reshaping of the basic socioeconomic relations and the underlying values of this [modern industrial] society. (204)

Since the early 1970s, many feminists, especially ecological feminists ("Eco-feminists"), have defended Ruether's basic point: the environment is a feminist issue.

Just what makes the environment (ecology) a feminist issue? What are some of the alleged connections between the domination of women and the domination of nature? How and why is recognition of these connections important to feminism, environmentalism, and environmental philosophy? Answering these questions is largely what Eco-feminism is about.

In this essay I offer an introduction to the literature and issues of Eco-feminism. I begin with a characterization of Eco-feminism. Then I identify eight sorts of connections--what I call "woman-nature connections"--that Eco-feminists claim link the twin dominations of women and nature. Discussion of these alleged connections provides an overview of the scholarly literature in Eco-feminism and the sorts of reasons Eco-feminists have given for the centrality of Eco-feminist insights to environmental philosophy and feminism. I conclude by suggesting that the philosophical significance of Eco-feminism is that it challenges feminism to take environmental issues seriously,

environmental philosophy to take feminism seriously, and philosophy to take both seriously.

Key Words: Ecology, Feminism, Eco-feminism

*One of the best concepts to nurture
Environmentalism as well as Feminism –*

Ravi Gowsami

We are all familiar with the concepts of environmentalism and feminism. But there is a branch of these two ideologies that actually combines them both called Eco-feminism. According to Concise Oxford English Dictionary, the word 'ecology' is "the branch of biology concerned with the relations of organisms to one another and to their physical surroundings." The word 'ecology' is derived from the Greek word 'oikos' which means 'house'. The word 'ecology' was coined by German biologist, Ernst Haeckel in the 1870s. The word 'feminism' on the other hand, is derived from the French word 'féminisme'. According to Concise Oxford English Dictionary, the word 'feminism' means "the advocacy of women's rights on the grounds of sexual equality. Eco-feminism, also called ecological feminism, branch of feminism that examines the connections between women and nature. Its name was coined by French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974.

Both the 'Feminist Front' group and 'The League of Women's Rights' adhered to the statutes of the 1901 law. Françoise d'Eaubonne stated that some members of the 'Feminist Front' group separated and founded an information center called the 'Ecology-Feminism Center' and thus a new movement named 'Eco-feminism' came into existence and attempted to connect feminism and ecology.

Françoise d'Eaubonne (1974) stated that at present humanity is confronted with two threats overpopulation and the destruction of nature due to patriarchy.

Men's control of women's bodies resulted in overpopulation and men's control over nature resulted in the destruction of natural resources. Françoise d'Eaubonne maintains that patriarchy is the source of the exploitation of women and the destruction of nature. According to Françoise d'Eaubonne, the aim of this new movement pointed to the "need to remake the planet around a totally new model." In order to reinstate the planet

in a new way, Francoise d'Eaubonne (1974) pointed to the need for a 'mutation' of the planet. Thus, Francoise d'Eaubonne stated that the aim of 'Ecology-Feminism Centre' is "to tear the planet away from the male today in order to restore it for humanity of tomorrow. That is the only alternative, for if the male society persists; there will be no tomorrow for humanity."

Karen J. Warren (1993a) mentioned that there are eight kinds of connection that exists between women and nature. Karen J. Warren stated that these connections provide an examination of the kinds of the domination of both women and nature. These connections between women and nature are historical, conceptual, empirical, symbolical, etymological, political, ethical and lastly, theoretical.

Karen J. Warren maintains that in tracing the origin of the domination of both women and nature, some Eco-feminists focus on the historical connections which began with the Indo-European invasion, according to some others, in the rationalist tradition and in the classical Greek philosophy, while some trace it during the sixteenth and seventeenth century scientific revolution. Some Eco-feminists claim that the domination of both women and nature is rooted in conceptual connections. In the words of Karen J. Warren, "A conceptual framework is a socially constructed set of basic beliefs, values, attitudes and assumptions that shape and reflect how one views oneself and others."¹ According to Karen J. Warren (1994), a 'conceptual framework' is 'oppressive' when it maintains relations of subordination and dominance. Karen J. Warren mentioned that a 'patriarchal conceptual framework' is 'oppressive' when it maintains and justifies male subordination of female. Karen J. Warren (1994) stated that the five characteristics of an 'oppressive' and 'patriarchal conceptual framework' includes

- (i) 'value-hierarchical("Up Down") thinking' which places higher value to the 'Up' as for example, 'men' than to the 'Down' as for example, 'women';
- (ii) 'value dualisms ("either-or" thinking)' consists of disjunctive pairs, which places higher value on one member of the pair. Here, higher value is given to 'reason', 'mind', 'man', whereas 'emotion', 'body', 'woman' are treated as inferior.
- (iii) 'power-over conceptions of power' which maintains relations of domination and control
- (iv) 'conceptions of privilege' which privilege 'Ups' or which is higher in 'Up-Down' relationships,

- (v) 'a logic of domination' where the logical structure of argument justifies the relationships of domination based on the justification that the one who is superior subordinates the other who is inferior.

Thus, we find that these different types of connections between women and nature are important for Eco-feminism because these connections not only reveal women's closeness to nature but also disclose the treatment of both women and nature in society. Women and nature are related because both of them are mothers. Not only in Western culture, but also in Indian culture nature is identified as female.

Women are identified with nature. Their closeness to nature sanctions the exploitation of both women and nature by men. To resist the subjugation of women and the exploitation of nature, the patriarchal structure needs to be eliminated from the society.

There are two basic perspectives of Eco-feminism. These are an essentialist Eco-feminism and a constructionist Eco-feminism. Thus, by analysing both the essentialist and constructionist perspectives, we find that in the essentialist perspective, there is an essential relation between women and nature because both of them are mothers. The role played by women in biological reproduction of human species can be linked to the nature's productivity and creativity. The separation of men from both women and nature gave men power to control both women and nature. On the other hand, in the constructionist perspective, we find that the relationship between women and nature is socially constructed. The social construction of gender allows men to control and dominate both women and nature. But inspite of these diversified perspectives of Eco-feminism, both the essentialist and constructionist Eco-feminism views that the Western patriarchal culture is responsible for the domination of women and the denigration of nature. Thus, we see that both the essentialist and constructionist Eco-feminism views that the patriarchal culture is responsible for the subjugation of women and the exploitation of nature.

The adoption of the term had also been preceded by many women poetry and fiction in the 1960s and 70s, and has gained increasing prominence through the work of philosophers Val Plumwood and Karen Warren. It has also been adopted by other disciplines through the writing and activism of Arundhati Roy and Vandana Shiva.

In conclusion I can say that Eco-feminism is a movement against patriarchy. The goal of Eco-feminism is to empower women and to rescue nature from patriarchal oppression

and exploitation, which we need today. Thus, our aim is not to suggest elimination of only one form of domination rather all forms of dominations from the society. Hence, to emancipate women and nature from further exploitation this dominant androcentric attitude need to be changed. The domination should not be so strong as to suffocate the weak. History has witnessed strongest form of patriarchy in India resulting into child marriage, burning of the widow or sati etc. It was only after the period of renaissance education spread among the women that helped them to come out of the dark corners of the 91 home. Enlightenment has changed the attitude of both men and women. It is only an enlightened self that can change its attitude towards women as well as nature and endorse sustainability for the future generation. It is now time to seriously investigate the need of women at different strata of society and come up with solutions as aid in order to prevent exploitation. Enlightenment of women, concern of the society for the women and governmental policies to come up with the solutions to the problem of women need to be integrated.

The Liberation of the earth, the liberation of women, and the liberation of all humanity is the next step of freedom we need to work for, and it's the next step of peace that we need to create"

– **Vandana Shiva**

Chapter – 4

NATURE AND CULTURE IN LITERATURE: A STUDY FROM ECOFEMINISTIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract:

Ecofeminism springs from two words, namely Ecology and Feminism. The Ecofeminism concept while uniting the principles of ecology and feminism, “revaluate” the position of standardized group of “other,” in an unrestrictive sense including “animals, the people of colour, Third World, economically backward,” etc.(Lori Gruen, *Dismantling Oppression: An Analysis of the Connection Between Women and Animals*) The history of male dominance on Earth and Woman has caused Woman to voice her concern and speak, especially, on behalf of the muted nonhuman world. Ecofeminism attempts to combine the two struggles, i.e. Feminism and ecology “to remake the planet around a totally new model.”(d’Eaubonne) The struggle spread the message that the earth is in the danger of perishing and male-centric world was responsible for such an imminent threat. The present paper examines the reflection of nature and culture from ecofeministic perspectives.

Key words: Ecofeminism, ecology, muted, male-centric.

Ecofeminism springs from two words, namely Ecology and Feminism. The Ecofeminism concept while uniting the principles of ecology and feminism, “revaluate” the position of standardized group of “other,” in an unrestrictive sense including “animals, the people of colour, Third World, economically backward,” etc.(Lori Gruen, *Dismantling Oppression: An Analysis of the Connection Between Women and Animals*)

Eco/Feminism – Ecofeminism began as an academic movement that correlated the destruction of nature together with domination of women by men. Coined by the French writer Françoise d'Eaubonne in her book *Le Féminisme ou la Mort* (1974), the movement is an effort to excise all forms of inequity towards women and environment. Ecofeminism attempts to combine the two struggles, i.e. Feminism and ecology “to remake the planet around a totally new model.”(d’Eaubonne) The struggle spread the message that the earth is in the danger of perishing and male-centric world was responsible for such an imminent threat. The slogan of the Ecology Feminism

Centre was “to tear the planet away from the male today in order to restore it for humanity for tomorrow... If the male society persists there will be no tomorrow for humanity.”(d’Eaubonne, *Le Féminisme ou la Mort*,175p). D’Eaubonne argued that both capitalist and socialist ideologies were to be blamed for ecological degradation. She considered that patriarchal power was the root cause. In her research for matriarchal societies, she unearthed women who supported such societies, namely August Babel, Johann Bachofen, and Robert Briffault. The earth was conditioned by Man to suit his living. Thus the male society “built by males and for males” (176) ruled. She says that the earth who is a ...symbol and for preserver of the Great Mothers, has had a harder life and has resisted longer; today her conqueror has reduced her to agony. This is the price phallocracy. (d’Eaubonne, *Le Féminisme ou la Mort*,188)

As already mentioned above, Ecofeminism upholds the philosophy of both Ecology and the ideology of Feminism. The term Ecology originated from Greek from the word ‘oikos’ meaning “house,” or “environment.” Aldo Leopold in essay “Land Ethic” (1949) sketched the ecofeminist hypothesis for the first time where he laid an ethic for the land that calls for a communion between nonhuman entities, i.e. animals, plants, land, air, water, and humans on equivalent basis. Lawrence Buell in the chapter *The Emergence of Environmental Criticism*, characterizes “Ecology” as the study of both the “biological interrelationships and the flow of energy through organisms and inorganic matter.”(13) Explaining it symbolically, he says,

Metaphorically, furthermore, “ecology” can be stretched to cover “energy-exchange and interconnection” in “other realms” too: from technology-based communication systems to the “ecology” of thinking or composition (Synder 2004: 5,9). (*The Emergence of Environmental Criticism*, 13)

Ernst Heinrich Haeckel first used the word ‘ecology’ in his book *Generelle Morphologie der Organismen* (1866). Explaining the term ecology as “The economy of nature,” he said, it is a study of co-communication and interplay between the living and non-living beings. The definition (translated into English in 1883) of Ecology as given by Haeckel, in German in the year 1879, goes as follows:

By ecology we mean the body of knowledge concerning the economy of nature—the investigation of the total relations of the animal both to the inorganic and to its organic environment; including, above all, its friendly and inimical relations with those animals and plants with which it comes directly or indirectly into contact—in a word, ecology is the study of all those complex interrelations referred to by Darwin as the conditions of the struggle for existence. (Wiley Online Library, *The Bulletin of the Ecological Society of America* Volume 94, Issue 3, *Version of Record online*: 1 JUL 2013)

The history of male dominance on Earth and Woman has caused Woman to voice her concern and speak, especially, on behalf of the muted nonhuman world.

Lori Gruen in her essay *Dismantling Oppression: an Analysis of the Connection between Women and Animals*, analyses the concocted theories of human cultural development by the scientists and anthropologists. In each of the experiments and theories, Man has tried to demean and establish his supremacy over the Woman and female Animals. Thus, Man has been suppressing Woman and Nature (land, soil, water, animals, and plant life) in many forms and its inception took place long time back. This oppression ensues in the following manner:

Historical – Historically, from the period the nomadic man settled down, land and women were conquered in battles and wars. It was taken for granted that those who won would be entailed to own them. Thus, the concept of owning both land and women has been perspective that comes down from male ideological camp.

Social – According to Lori Gruen, because of a want for workforce on the land led man to behave oppressively towards both women (for breeding children) and animals (that would labour in the field like machines) and hold them captive. Socially, women's prolonged time spent in childbirth and childrearing activities conceive her inferior for participating in the outdoor occupations. She has been, thereby, secluded and excluded physically and biologically from participating in the social gatherings due to manmade false notions. Animals, too, have been tamed, for social purpose, from the beginning.

Mythical – Through various myths, man has been controlling women, animals and land. According to Mary Daly, the negation of woman in myths takes place by fudging the stories. In *Gyn/Ecology*, she illustrates through the examples of metaphor of woman in Christian and Greek ancient myths. She highlights that the “rape of the Goddess” exists as “universal theme in patriarchal myths.” Quoting Anne Dellenbaugh, Mary Daly says that the myth of “Virgin birth” where “Mary does nothing” has “stripped all women of their integrity, for the female was transformed into little more than a hollow eggshell, a void waiting to be made by the male.” (58) The Post-World War II technologies and continual and increased consumption in the societies marching towards progress has separated Man and transformed him into a legend of Superior being. The myth of drawing parallel between the land and woman and offering Women and animals (which were closer to nature and likened to fertility of earth) in sacrifice to appease manmade gods uprooted of the image of women.

Scientific – Lori Gruen's study reveals that scientists, all over the world in the name of scientific progress have conducted a number of experiments on animals and women. Every year thousands and thousands of animals perish in the name of testing drugs and various other genetic researches. By reducing and treating animals as mere objects devoid of pain, suffering, and as “specimen meant to serve,” the detached scientists continue to slay them. The trials are equally acute in the case of women. Women are subjected to various forms contraceptive treatments, drugs, and hormonal administration

in the name of childbirths. Ursula K. Le Guin's article in *The Ecocriticism Reader* titled *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction* narrating the Story of the Ascent of Man, deduces that

...is the mythology of modern technology, then its myth is tragic. "Technology" or "modern science" (using the words as they are usually used, in an unexamined shorthand standing for the "hard" sciences and high technology founded upon continuous economic growth), is a heroic undertaking, Herculean, Promethean, conceived as triumph, hence ultimately as tragedy. The fiction embodying this myth will be, and has been, triumphant (Man conquers earth, space, aliens, death, the future, etc.) and tragic (apocalypse, holocaust, then or now). (*The Ecocriticism Reader*, 153)

Epistemological – The Age of Reason and Enlightenment has turned Man not only practical but also driven him away from the laps of Nature and turned him into a *Frankenstein* (Mary Shelley's invention). Francis Bacon's, the father of modern industrial science, Vandana Shiva points out in *Staying Alive*, programme was not "humanly inclusive" as it was only for a few rich, male, European entrepreneurs and that only propelled human knowledge combined with science. Modern science, therefore, by upholding the socio-political-economic system of western capitalist patriarchy, rules, devalues, and exploits nature, women, and the poor.

Economic – Economic wealth in the form of land and wealth (in the form of material comforts, gems, and jewels) has left him with irrepressible desire to plunder earth and chain woman. In *The Challenge to Theology* by Rosemary Radford Ruether tries to indicate that to secure himself from death, Man is seeking to amass power at the expense of the rest of humans and the earth. She says that in the process of hoarding away the wealth and gain power, they construct systems of abuse and exploit the "others." Many a times, as pointed by Virginia Woolf, in her text *A Room of One's Own*, woman's economic dependence on Man leaves her with no choice but to remain chained.

Political – Through constructed political ideologies of power and dualities where Man/Woman is understood as masculine/feminine, Strong/Weak, Scientific/unsystematic, he has been misusing women and nature for years. By his "phallogocentric" (Mary Dale) and misogynist attitude, he has systematically kept her away from the knowledge and the economic realms. In a similar way, man has a political hold over land, animals, and the resources.

Linguistic – Man has been "splitting" woman by means of language. She is regarded as a hag, crone, wild, witch, jealous or an intractable being. Sometimes she is likened to animals with the use of words like "bitch." Taking advantage of her biological factors, Man categorises woman as soft, irrational, and emotional. The language, Mary Daly,

also played its role in splitting and turning the Self of Woman into that which she is not. (Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology*)

Lori Gruen, while ruling out Radical, Marxist, Liberal, and Socialist Feminisms, and putting aside the Animal Liberationist Theories, says that all these theories put forward a line of ascendancy of one over the other and end up in creating

...a category of “otherness.” In the case of the anthropocentric feminists, “other” is nonhuman animals and nature; for radical feminists, “other” is culture and man; for the animal liberationists, “other” is human emotion and collectivity. The maintenance of such dualisms allows for the continued conceptualization of hierarchies in which a theoretically privileged group or way of thinking is superior. By establishing superiority in theory, the groundwork is laid for oppression of the inferior in practice. (*Dismantling Oppression: An Analysis of the Connection between Women and Animals*, 80)

Various other ecofeminists like Susan Griffin in her text such as *Women and Nature*, Carolyn Merchant in *The Death of Nature*, Mary Daly in *Gyn/Ecology*, and Vandana Shiva in *Staying Alive* tried to draw a correspondence between the overrule of man on women and man-made culture on nature. The theorists theorise that just as man’s supremacy gains control over women at large, so is the case with preponderance of culture (established by man) over nature. Carolyn Merchant in her work *The Death of Nature* drawing parallel between the images of woman and nature, shows the representation of “a disorderly woman” against the earlier symbol of “nurturing mother” was projected to remove the obstacles in the way of progress (i.e. commercially and industrially). Merchant advocates that such “a mechanistic world view not only entails the devaluation of traditional femininity, but also results in the human exploitation of nature.”

Karen Warren text *Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What it is and Why it matters*, centres her argument on the sharing varied traits, experiences, and voices of Women that are neither universal in nature nor exclusive. She figures that it is not necessary to gather a common “female essence” in theorizing, fighting as an activist or campaigning in movements. According to her “woman is a concept that allows feminists to organize those traits, experiences, and voices in order to theorize and fight.” She adds saying that “all humans are affected by environmental degradation, women, people of color, children, and the poor throughout the world experience environmental harms disproportionately,” and nature, thus according to her, becomes “a feminist issue.” (*Ecofeminist Philosophy: A Western Perspective on What it is and Why it matters*, 16)

Greta Gaard, in her essay *Ecofeminism and Native American Cultures*, draws out parallels between exploitation between women and animals. Her thoughts and body is measured not in terms of human, but as an “other.” She cites examples like eating vegetables means to stay passive like a woman, applauding a woman at work for having thought “like a man,” and treating woman’s body “like a piece of meat.” The race of man equals woman to Earth and expects a sacrificial and “giving” attitude in her character. A woman, who has a high rate of fertility, is disdained and her bounty flesh is despised. Feminine connotations given to nature like “virgin forest,” and “rape of the land,” conclude anthropocentric nature of society.

Susan Griffin in her book *Woman and Nature* speaks of the Man trapped in the delusion of culture and woman resorting to “denial and domination.” Reading a few lines from the text, *Woman and Nature*, at the conference on Feminist Perspectives on Pornography (an audio recording of the conference found at the Internet archive.org library), Susan says that

...woman speaks with nature. That she hears voices from under the earth, that wind blows in her ears and the trees whisper to her and the dead sing through her mouth and the cries of the birds are clear. But for him this dialogue is over. He says that he is not part of this world that he was set on this earth as a stranger. He sets himself apart from Woman and Nature. (Susan Griffin and Nellie Wong at the *Feminist Perspectives on Pornography: Internet Archive* <http://pacifcaradioarchives.org/american-women-making-history-and-culture-1963-1982>)

Val Plumwood in *Nature, self, and Gender* speaking of emotion that is set apart from reason on the belief that the former, that involves “caring” and “love,” is personal and opposed to the “understanding.” Feminine emotions are also, she adds, in a similar way are “essentially unreliable untrustworthy, and morally irrelevant, an inferior domain to be dominated by a superior, disinterested (and of course masculine) reason.” She pleads, stating, that a reverence “for nature, then, should not be viewed as the completion of a process of (masculine) universalization, moral abstraction, and disconnection, discarding the self, emotions, and special ties (all, of course, associated with the private sphere and femininity).” Appealing the ecofeminists to intensify and enhance the movement, she calls them to throw the yolk of dual constructions between man and woman and “exclusionary and polarized conception of the human, via the desire to exclude and distance from the feminine and the nonhuman. (*Nature, Self, and Gender: Feminism, Environmental Philosophy, and the Critique of Rationalism*, Val Plumwood. 286-292)

Vandana Shiva in her text *Staying Alive*, while reviewing the conscience based implementation of science and technology (as it is most often politically misused), accepts that the feminist and ecological critiques have tried to extend their beliefs on the

experiments of science into the public. Women, she says, have been kept out of the technological development thus turning them “de-skilled and de-intellectualised appendages.” She maintains that modernisation brought forth “new kind of dominance.” Recognition into the structures of productivity and growth, pictured as positive, is necessitated. Development is legitimised by transforming the traditional cultures, that integrate nature and natural surrounding (like eating millets, living in a bamboo hut, wearing home-spun clothes), into poverty. Thus, she says that the

...paradox and crisis of development arises from the mistaken identification of culturally perceived poverty with real material poverty, and the mistaken identification of the growth of commodity production as better satisfaction of basic needs. In actual fact, there is less water, less fertile soil, less genetic Wealth as a result of the , development process. (*Staying Alive*, 11)

Francis Bacon, the father of modern industrial science, she points out, was not “humanly inclusive” as his programme was only for a few rich, male, European entrepreneurs and that only propelled human knowledge combined with science. Modern science, therefore, by upholding the socio-political-economic system of western capitalist patriarchy, rules, devalues, and exploits nature, women, and the poor. Women’s movements appeal that moving away from the laws of natural world and lap of Nature is a threat to the existence of all.

Contemporary women's ecological struggles are new attempts to establish that steadiness and stability are not stagnation, and balance with nature's essential ecological processes is not technological backwardness but technological sophistication. At a time when a quarter of the world's population is threatened by starvation due to erosion of soil, water and genetic diversity of living resources, chasing the mirage of unending growth, by spreading resource destructive technologies, becomes a major source of genocide. The killing of people by the murder of nature is an invisible form of violence which is today the biggest threat to justice and peace. (*Staying Alive*, 34)

Chipko movement is one such movement cited by Vandana Shiva that began in 1973 is one such movement where more than three hundred women from different segments of society participated and brought about a successful turn to the event. In Kenya, too, in the year 1977, Professor Wangari Maathai took up a movement called Green Belt Movement. It involved rural tree planting program to safeguard desertification of land. The activists and participants, thus empowering and enlightening the public on environment, planted around thousand trees around the villages. Environmental movements such as these are historical landmarks because women’s political and moral strength is tested and the male psyche acknowledges their ecological perception.

Meera Baindur in her text *Nature in Indian Philosophy and Cultural Traditions* brings out references made to Nature during ancient civilisation. She calls into attention the views of early Greeks, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and African societies. Citing the views of the Greeks, Meera says that they viewed the whole universe that included everything under it is self-produced. The term “physis” is defined as “natura” in Roman language. A “stuff” that has power and is divine pervades all the animate and inanimate things in the universe and thereby making holistic in practice. Speaking of the early Indian philosophy of nature is that since Vedic age the concept of “oneness of all creation” and a kinship with environment was followed during Rig-Veda times. Africans held an all-inclusive notion about nature in life-system and shared “bio-communitarianism” where there is a social interaction between community and biosphere. The Chinese believed in living in harmony with nature as well as in the faith laid by Confucius who promoted a hierarchy among nature and human beings. The neo-Confucian adopted holistic views that relate “oneself as microcosm to the universe” that acts as macrocosm. The Japanese followed three worldviews, namely the Buddhism, Confucian, and Shinto philosophies. The Shinto, a cult that emerged from the indigenous people of Japan, attached a “non-symbolic” natural attitude towards nature and believed that the latter has “intrinsic value.”

Nature, though, understood as holistic in theoretical context, is converted into an object that stands divorced in the pragmatic matters of human lives. Humans, from the beginning, have questioned their place in the nature. Their inclusive or exclusive role is the determinant factor in laying down of ethics required for survival. An all-exclusive argument, Meera Baidra says, reflects anthropocentric line of thought. The contention that nature has an intrinsic value, besides serving utilitarian purpose, propagates bio-centric idea.

Similar to movements like feminism and civil rights that have spread its ideologies into literary studies, nature consciousness made an impact on literature at a very late period. Many historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and other related disciplines in humanities reflect the theme of “Endangered Earth,” in their studies as remarked by Cheryll Glotfelty in *The Ecocriticism Reader*. It began with individual studies arose randomly with titles such as “American Studies, regionalism, pastoralism, the frontier, human ecology, science and literature, nature in literature, landscape in literature, etc.” William Rueckert in his essay *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism*, coined the term Ecocriticism. Cheryll Glotfelty defines it as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment.” In the Introduction of the text *The Ecocriticism Reader* she expounds it as a premise that connects the human culture to the physical, nonhuman, world. It, thereby,

Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature. As a critical stance, it has

one foot in literature and the other on land; as a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between the human and the nonhuman. (The Ecocriticism Reader, *Introduction*. xix)

Expanding Rueckert's definition of Ecocriticism, that restricted itself only to the study of literature in relation to ecological concepts, Glotfelty proposes to include all possible analogies and relations under the umbrella of Ecocriticism, thus making it interdisciplinary. Lawrence Buell, for the sake of convenience, divided the 'ecocritics' into two waves, i.e. the first-wave and second-wave of ecocriticism. The first-wave ecocritics regarded the result of culture upon nature and sought to bring it back to its original self through their writings. The second-wave of ecocriticism questioned the lost natural surroundings and the built-in environments environed by the urban contexts.

Jonathan Bate in *The Song of the Earth* studies the literary aspects in the works of Thomas Hardy, Jane Austen, D. H. Lawrence, Shakespeare, Rousseau, Mary Shelley, Thomas Utopia, Wordsworth, Keats, Coleridge, Byron, Hughes, Hudson, and so forth. He notes down how the meaning of culture, environment, and tradition changed with the change in nature in the course of time. The writings of a few writers like Shakespeare held the nature in the background, in some like Hardy, Austen, and Hughes depicted the natural world in unison in the human bonds, and sometimes poets like Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats celebrated the "sweetness" of the ecological wholeness and the "unification in the workings of the earth."

Lawrence Buell in *The Emergence of Environmental Criticism* explains that the writer may or may not be serious enough to foreground environment, though it may be present in the background of the work. In the chapter Space, Place, and Imagination where the characters spend most of the time in "non-place" the environmental consciousness appears to be missing. With the boundaries of the places being encroached by the globalised world, and with difficulty in sustaining the holistic community, new forms of arrangements, adaptations, and new means of restoration of the urban community are adopted. Lawrence, in the process, alludes to Dickens, Hardy, More, Thoreau, and Mahasweta Devi.

The analysis of the Bates and Buell on British and American literary writers from the ecological point of view reveals that allusions to Nature was always a subject alluded to either with a conscious effort or unconsciously. Glotfelty and Fromm's *The Ecocriticism Reader* covers the essays that investigate the amount of effort that has gone into the works with a concern towards the future of environment. Joseph Meeker's *The Comic Mode* illustrates that the Comedies play a major role in bringing the biology of life to the forefront. Citing the works of Shakespeare (Romeo and Juliet, Twelfth Night), Joseph Heller (Catch-22), Moliere (Tartuffe: or the Imposter) and Aristophanes

(Lysistrata), Meeker explicates, “comedy grows from the biological circumstances of life.” Survival does not depend on the battles or warfare as Lysistrata tries to enlighten the warriors and politicians in the Greek comic drama, Lysistrata, or the sentimental scientific theories of Darwin or in Alfred Tennyson’s comprehension of Nature as “red in tooth and claw.” The evolution among animals and plants is not based on the maxim of rat race or battle for life, to see who is going to survive, like tragedy. The secret of evolution lies in “adaptation and accommodation, with the various species exploring opportunistically their environments,” as a means to “maintain existence.” As in comedy, biology of life is to “muddle through.”

Scott Russell Sanders in his piece of writing, *Speaking A Word For Nature* portrays how writers like Emerson, Chateaubriand, though European by origin, Thoreau, Samuel Clemens, and Faulkner squeezed in the “powerful influence of the New World landscape.” Cynthia Deitering in, *The Postnatural Novel*, comments in “Toxic Consciousness In Fiction” on the novelists of post 1980s. She examines novelists like Don DeLillo, Walker Percy, Paul Theroux, T. Coraghessan Boyle, Richard Russo, Saul Bellow, Margaret Atwood, and William Gaddis and speculates their preoccupation with the toxic environment.

The article on The Heroines of Nature by Vera L. Norwood in *The Ecocriticism Reader* discusses the works of four women Nature writers, Isabella Bird, Mary Austin, Rachel Carson, and Annie Dillard. Bird’s *A Lady’s Life in the Rocky Mountains*, is as much feministic in approach as much in her desire to be an ecologist. In her chronicles addressed to her sister, she speaks of “a need for religious solitude.” Mary Austin explores “the desolate colors of the desert” in *The Land of Little Rain*. Austin accepts and treasures the challenges the wilderness of nature that gives rise to a sense of wonder in her. Justifying the nature and by refuting the class structure of cultural systems that mistake the desert for a wasteland, snakes as evil, she teaches how best to respond to the natural systems of life. She wishes that culture, instead of ruining the nature that is being “peopled” by the mechanistic intentions of man, adapts itself to the topography of ecology. Rachel Carson’s *The Sea Around Us*, that earned her the John Burroughs Medal and the National Book Award, brings out “an organic, interactive connection between humans and the rest of the biosphere.” Annie Dillard celebrates the mysteries of nature in her book *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek*. Scott Slovic also appreciates Dillard for her “meticulous” of nature. Scott Slavic looking into the work of Edward Abbey, *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, finds a display towards natural phenomenon of life startling and with a sense of alertness concerning nature like Dillard. By juxtaposing, two diversified, antagonistic, and startling elements side by side, there is a strain in interiorizing the “disparate elements – such as the self and nature or, perhaps, the divergent moral and aesthetic strata.” The novel *The Monkey Wrench Gang*, he says, “vaults us to higher levels of awareness.” In *The Ecocriticism Reader*, Michael J. McDowell, applies Bakhtinian theory of heteroglossia from *Dialogic Imagination* and features of

Carnavalesque to nature writers. An analysis of landscape literature using Bakhtin's form of "polyphonic voices," "intertextuality," "chronotope," and "open-endedness," would bring in nature that "ceased to be a living participant in the events of life." Bakhtin's feature of Carnavalesque also offers "potentially more accurate representation of natural landscape."

In the Indian context, the association of the writers with Nature and natural surroundings in their writings dates back to the era of Before Christ. Meera Baindra in her text *Nature in Indian Philosophy and Cultural Traditions*, speaking of Nature's presence and absence in Indian literature, enumerates the presence of nature in old Indian epics like Ramayana, Mahabharata, the poetic plays of Kalidasa and Banabhatta. The nonhuman world was inherent feature in the writing of all the ancient Indian works. Unlike the American society that learnt to introduce the landscapes and other features of nature with a conscious effort in their writings, the animals, forests, and landscapes overshadow the mythical narratives in Indian literature. Analysing the Indian literature with respect to the allusions to Nature, Meera Baindra says that

...nature in the literature is one of the ways in which we could analyse nature that is inclusive of the human being. In the literature, the non-human is included in the human world. Nature is seldom passive in these narratives; nature participates in the human world by being itself, active as nature. Winds blow, clouds rain, the forest fires burn, and mountains stand tall. All these are dharma, the appointed duties of natural things or the order of nature. Karma, as actions of nature objects, is completely instinctive and in sync with their dharma. It is through these categories that the feminisation of nature or the silencing of nature takes place. The descriptions of human engagement with nature are also based on karma and dharma. The adaptation to seasons and landscapes, the ethical and moral attitude to the non-human part of the world are all based on activities and the order of nature. (*Nature in Indian Philosophy and Cultural Traditions*, 169-170)

Therefore, Nature, which is depicted in humanised form, is synthesized into the customs, thoughts, culture, and living systems of Indian community. The society lives not on the "mutual benefit cooperation," but rather is based on an understanding and appreciative principle of life between the animals and the humans. The writer calls for an "ecotopia," that lays down its premise on harmonised and eco-friendly living.

Tagore's essay on *Tapovan*, ('Forest of Purity'), teaches that the culture of life emerges from the forests. One of the greatest intellectuals and the greatest works have emerged when in communion with the natural world of trees, rivers, and lakes. The Religion of Forest, Tagore says, brings in the building the life sustaining unifying forces as compassion, empathy, and coexistence.

In the similar way, the Post-Independence era sees writers like Mahasweta Devi who have worked through to unify the thoughts of people with the surroundings that are often neglected and exploited. *Aranyer Adhikar*, her first novel voices her concern for the tribals, and describes the experiences of manipulation to which the tribal community is subjected. In the novel *The Book of the Hunter*, she speaks the way the cities are encroaching the forests areas and how the changing times are turning the tribal community people, like Shabars, into criminals. Her short Fairy Tale “ecotopian” narratives in the book *The Politics of Literary Theory and Representation: Writings on Activism and Aesthetics*, tell the tales of environmental degradation and destruction of forests resulting in the extinction of nature conscious tribal culture.

A Town Like Ours, Kavery Nambisan’s latest novel, is a conceived in a Town named Pigakshipura. A priest, converted into a business entrepreneur, becomes the owner of Sugandha Enterprise and manages the whole town, which is witnessed by the goddess Pingakshi. Kavery Nambisan, scornfully and mockingly describes the process of progress ventured by the Sugandha owner. He sets out to establish industries, Detergent factories, township for residence, wedding mantapa, movie theatre, and auditorium, provides to the temples and helps to educate the young through donation-based schools. He changed the face of the town that was a self-sufficient village in the past. He developed the village that was also uncared for by the government. The Sungandha Enterprise now dreams of constructing a shopping complex by chewing the Western Ghats “by dozens of stone-breaking, stone-drilling, stone-crushing, stone-powdering and hill-destroying machines.” (*TLO*, 8 p)

Sugandha, which was founded on a village that reminded of “fields of ragi, turmeric, mustard, and the rest of it,” laid down solid stony buildings that did not crave for any “cow dung or goat dung.” (56) He began his life as a priest “pledged his life to business” with the production of agarbatthis of different blends in the temple premises. The man with his “clean brahminic ancestry” went to embark on trade after trade and made money set a detergent factory where the workers get deaf and other ailments are treated from his own medical clinic where the treatment and medicines are supplied freely. The Sungandha set up a pesticide factory and had at least nine bore wells dug “into the bowels of the earth, going right through its heart” and the “Good old Mother Earth obliged.” (*TLO*, 55 p)

He provides jobs for any child who is above the age of eleven years, and he bought the lands of tribal people to grow tapiaco that is cheap, colourless, tasteless, quick-mixing powder, and good for nothing. He not only built schools, colleges, polytechnics, hostels, homes, playgrounds, clinics, shops, and many more for which he won The Business Excellence Award for the third time, but also has the credit for creating a “mammoth garbage dump.” The dump was a big area of clean water that was the dwelling place for variety of fish, allowed washerwoman to wash clothes, and where buffaloes could be

found scrubbing and relaxing by themselves. As the Sugandha started dumping its industrial “debris” into the dried up pond, the water had receded due to the bore wells that were dug. He turned the green pastures and watered land into a land of “waste accumulates.” (*TLO*, 201 p) He, who has embraced the “lowly life of sale and profit” with great courage, turned the black hair of the newly born infants and children into white hair with his pesticides that was used to kill termites, worms, flies, or ants. The pesticides seeped into the clean drinking and bathing ground water for which the Sugandha did not take any credit. The pesticides designed to bring “Progress” in the village ensured

...the demise of insects, worms and all those crawly creatures of the soil and even those which flutter in the air, namely dragonflies, wasps, bees and houseflies. Then there are beetles, the aredanut insect, the blanket bug, white ants, rust-brown ants and the butterfly in all its hues...[] With the insects gone, the birds will disappear too perhaps, good show, those nasty things peck away at grains and fruit without any discrimination, it is perfectly all right by us if we do not hear their pointless chirping. (*TLO*, 55-56)

The writer, thus while pointing at the accumulation of the residue, dumped by the agarbatthis, detergents and pesticides, turned the land into “a hill of garbage” spoiling the ecological unit of land and the genetic constitution of people. However, she retorts saying that the Sugandha Enterprise’s “ecosystem,” where his balance sheets of income versus expenditure spent, looted, again shoved into business and stacked, flourished. His enterprise of development does not stop at that. They have misused the women and taken advantage of them. The Sugandha man of business, once, offers to hold and buy the whore, who calls herself “chudayil,” Rajakumari, all to himself with a present of diamond earrings. Rajakumari, though a harlot by profession, has a sense of morality that he lacks and refuses his deal. Saroja, a woman in mid-twenties, rejecting her in-laws, killing her useless and innocent husband and her just-born baby (whom she could not afford to bring up), comes to Pingakshipura with her son, Gundumani, to look for a means of survival. She meets Vasu, also a run-away with his dead sister’s girl-child, Rukma. Rukma’s father kills her mother when she is born. Saroja, Gundumani, Vasu and Rukma live like a family in a cab. After a few years, Saroja dreams to own a house, a small home with a garden just for the four of them. She, in desperation to own a land and a house, allows Devaraya, the Sugandha boss’ cousin, Tejaswini’s husband, to take advantage of her. Devaraya, a cruel and lusty brute, makes advancement towards Saroja in front of his own younger, invalid daughter, Chandrika. Chandrika is attacked by a paralytic stroke because of a fall from the stairs, the severity of which increases due to her father’s neglect. In consequence, she is unable to move her body. Before she reveals the secret of his neglect, he bandages her from top to bottom in the name of treatment and care.

The men of Sugandha enterprise use the women like the way they have been exploiting the resources of the village for their personal means. The male-voiced society and the manmade technology in the name development and civilization have led to miserable life for women.

The annihilation of the surface of the earth and the resulting swamp will devour people like him just as quicksand does or as Mary Shelley's Frankenstein who devoured his creator. To regard natural resources materialistically would turn the society into what Lawrence Buell in *The Emergence of Environmental Criticism* acknowledges as "risk society." This means that even those who are the cause of or persons behind the "growing malaise" of environmental issues are under the risk of it. In *A Town Like Ours*, the Sugandha Enterprises, which has been spreading toxic elements (pesticides) in the water, also, according to Buell, stands at the risk of falling into the own trap that they have connived.

Similarly, Neeland, Peter, and Douglas Clare in the novel *Gain* by Richard Powers are victims of the poison that they began. They thrived in the "Progressive Era," where the "mountains had been cut for easy passage and the valleys raised up for richer cultivation" and come with the promise to bring "death itself" at "optimal points." Franklin Kennibar, Sr., quoting Locke "Private Vice makes a Public Virtue," presents the motto of the lethal company that is, to

...make a profit. To make a consistent profit. To make a profit in the long run. To make a living. To make things. To make things in the most economical way. To make the greatest number of things. To make the greatest things...To rationalize nature...To improve the landscape... "to shatter space and arrest time."[...] (*Gain*, Kindle Version)

Richard Powers novel, *Gain*, through metanarratives interlocks the plot of Laura Bodey, a divorced mother suffering from ovarian cancer and dies as a result, with Clare, a multinational company that produces soaps and detergents. Even those, like Laura, who wants to sue the company for selling poisonous products, cannot escape the presence of the teeming hazards.

No longer her home, this place they have given her to inhabit. She cannot hike from the living room to the kitchen without passing an exhibit. Floor by Germ-Guard. Windows by Cleer-Thru. Table by Colonial-Cote. The Bodey Mansion, that B-ticket, one-star museum of trade. But where else can she live? (*Gain*, Kindle Version)

The ubiquitous experience of Clare's products, its devastating effect on Laura's health, the indifference of multimillionaire's attitude, and the repetition of the cycle of spreading toxic substances, this time from Laura's son Tim, are some of the known situations that haunt the readers in the story.

Kavery Nambisan, who is a practising medical surgeon as well, relates a real-life incident of a young woman, named Anitha Jayadevan and aged twenty-three, in an article titled *Desperate Motherhood*, where the latter underwent a series of medical splutters that implicated confused diagnosis, hormonal stimulation, infection, the removal of one ovary and lot of pain. After seven years of treatment in the hands of doctors, when she was finally pregnant with twins, she suffered from infection. Very soon, the truth came to her as a blow after the twins died, that the doctors duped both Anitha and her family members by using her womb for surrogacy and the treatments that were being given to her by the doctors for so long were in real not necessary. Kavery Nambisan says that the pity is that at no time she felt the need to question the patriarchal traditions or science. However, Kavery Nambisan says that after a decade of suffering,

Anitha will realise how she tamely submitted to patriarchal conditioning: to be virtuous wife and mother...Medical malpractitioners; and society must introspect on situations like Anitha's where a young woman nearly lost her life in the quest for 'biological' motherhood. (*Desperate Motherhood, Malicious Medicines: My Experience with Fraud and Falsehood in Infertility Clinics* / Anitha Jayadevan | Penguin)

Kavery Nambisan's effort to inculcate the thought of living in nature is present in all her works. She has tried to impart the message of unification of man and woman in propinquity of nature several times. Even her short story, CBT published, *Once Upon a Forest*, takes up the theme of how the children find their real selves in the canopy of forest. The teenage boys and girls, during their tour in the forest of Panali Game Reserve, find themselves lost, desolated, and without any outside help. Unknowingly they get absorbed in the cosmos of nature, and appear to free their inner conflicts about one another. The disagreement that they had about each other, earlier, especially between Vinay and Smita, get resolved when they are faced with the challenge of saving their uncle, Captain Dev, who is injured and moving slowly towards death. The arrogant and condescending attitude disappears and they unite, trust, and fall back on one another for support and assist each other by realizing their strengths. In the challenge that they face, the forest, which is laid at the backdrop, appears to guide them silently. The spirit of the nature encourages and gives them courage to fight against the violators of law in the forest who come to cut the trees illegally. In the end, they succeed in overthrowing the poachers of the forests, by their united force, and bringing their uncle to the nearest hospital. The wild bear, that chases Soorie, the time that they spend in the wilderness of the forest, and the help that they receive from the villagers, who depend on the forest for their means of survival and are threatened by the poacher, combine to the forge the bond among nature and humanity and reinforce their belief in love for nature.

The saying United (here united signifies unifying the nature as well) We Stand and Divided We Fall resonates the exclamation of Emerson in his book, *Nature*, that tries to provide reason for world that “lacks unity, and lies broken and in heaps, is, because man is disunited with himself.” As Bina Aggarwal in her article *The Gender and Environment Debate: Lesson From India*, brings a small poetic dialogue between the foresters and the women.

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| | What do the forests bear? |
| Foresters: | Profits, resins and timber. |
| | What do the forests bear? |
| Women (Chorus): | Soil, water and pure air, |
| | Soil, water and pure air. |
| | Sustains the earth and all that she bears. (<i>The Gender and Environment Debate: Lesson from India</i> , 148 p) |

Through this dialogue, she tries to implant the idea that women, who uphold an eco-friendly outlook, are aware of the concept of “interrelatedness” (Bina Aggarwal, 148 p) in the ecosystem. They can realize a sense of Oneness with Earth and the forces of life, i.e. “Eutierria.” Eutierria is a word coined by Glen Albrecht in 2010. In the book *Ecopsychology: Science, Totems, and the Technological Species*, by Jr, P. H. K., & Hasbach, P. H., Glenn Albrecht, in his essay, “*Psychoterratic Conditions in a Scientific and Technological World*,” describe as a condition where one experiences a close association with nature and its elements. Glen defines the word Eutierria having originated from Greek, i.e. eu means good, tierra means earth, and ia means belonging to. Glen Abrecht, an Australian, explains that while studying the change in climate in the Hunter Valley region of Australia, which occurred due to an impact of coal industry, led him to experience a feeling of loss and he framed it as “eco-anxiety.” A sense of belonging and oneness with earth led him to coin the word Eutierria.

Unlike the earlier dualistic Western ideologies, according to Meera Baindur, Indian system of life process runs along the lines of unifying principles, i.e. Eutierria. Within Indian philosophy, Meera says,

...nature is cosmic and is inclusive of all created or existent components. Therefore, it would be a contradiction to speak of a separate “environmental or nature ethics” within the field of Indian moral philosophy. (Meera Baindur, *Nature in Indian Philosophy and Cultural Traditions*, 98)

Until the advent of Western modern world in India, Indian culture and system of life had very carefully safeguarded the ecological reserves and resources. Modernisation has resulted in depletion of the riches of Natural heritage that is the forests, wild life, soil, water, and so forth, in the name of road building, establishing railway system, and

plantation of various cash crops. Lawrence Buell in his essay on *Emergence of Environmental Criticism*, remarks that nature writers, in response to the capitalist phenomenon and ecological concerns around the world, are intermixing historical perception with the present natural system of life. Coorg, an anglicized form of Kodagu, is a place that is rich in forest reserves and wildlife.

Kavery Nambisan criticizes the insensitive outlook of those people whose material instincts have killed their intuitiveness and who, therefore, have failed to mark the changes towards destruction. In the novel, *The Hills of Angheri*, the writer's semi-autobiographical novel, studies the ascent of the protagonist, Nallinakshi (Nalli), in her career. In the process of creating her identity, Nalli's relationship with her village, Angheri, and her ambition, which is connected to her people in the village does not change. Nalli's childhood, ambition, and success runs in parallel with Jayant (Jai), her senior in the school and childhood playmate. Jai in many ways inspires Nalli and helps in channelizing her path towards success. Jai, whom Nalli loved, shares a dream of growing together in their career prospects and Nalli, all her life believing him waits for him to fulfil their dream project of building a hospital in Angheri.

Nallinakshi is the second daughter of the school headmaster in the village Angheri. She lives in a warm and pleasant joint family. She grew up listening to the stories of mythologies from her Ajja, Nalli's grandfather. The hills enhanced the beauty of Angheri and her grandfather, who transfused the hills with images and tales, made them appear all the more special. However, of all the children (Sujju, Vishnu, Jai, and Vijai), only Nalli connects herself with the hills and starts communicating with them. Her Ajja, grandfather, created a family of the hills giving each one of them a name like Doddabetta, Hulibetta, Donkubetta, Jenubetta, and Kadubetta. He even attributed male and feminine characteristics to them. He connected Nalli's fights and her trivial problems to the hills thus charging and sparking life into them. Once Nalli due to a fight with her Sujju complains to her grandfather and decides that she would be better off without a family, he immediately introduces her to the family of hills and tells her that everyone has a family, so how can she be without one. He tells her how once the mother hill, Gilibetta, who had gone flying to see the cities and the sun to punish her burnt her wings and thus remained separated from the rest of the family. Nalli, who was small, became sensitive and started crying.

Nalli cried every time she thought of the poor mother hill somewhere far away. Ajja told her that she could hear the hills if she listened carefully. She did not believe of course that the hills could speak, but when filled with any doubt she instinctively turned to them. invariably her gaze fell on Doddabetta, the most magnificent of the peaks. Sometimes the sun walked lightly on his shoulder, or a shining white cloud belted his

waist, and she thought she heard a voice that was very much like Appa's telling her what to do. (HA, 14)

With time as she grew, though she did not believe her grandfather's stories, she turned to them for relief, or when troubled with doubts or confusions. She learnt to listen to them silently and grew up watching them. When she goes to Chennai to study Medicine, she misses, more than her home, the hills. They were her guardians, her friends, and the reason for loving her village. Although she wanted to appear smart, stylish, and modern as a city girl in the college, her love at the thought of hills brought her back from the superficial world and made her feel move forward towards her dream.

When she was young, Ajja ad weaved magic around the hills. They lived and breathed like humans and if she listened very quietly, she would hear them speak. Nothing was so great, so pure and so true as the hills of Angheri. [...] Nalli would look at the hills swimming in mist, or bathed in the glow of dawn. She saw them sprout wings and fly away, leaving the skies as bare as a bald man's head. Alarmed, she would rub her eyes and look again to reassure herself. The rock and mud of the hills, the mist-soaked trees, the scrub and stones were quietly telling her to do, do, do. But what? (HA, 174p)

Jai's goal to become a doctor becomes her goal as well. They had played together and she was infatuated by his intelligence and seriousness to do something important in his life. Once, in their school days, he shows her his plan and draws a picture of the hospital, which he calls "our hospital". She starts to own the dream and works towards it. Jai completes his studies and becomes a good surgeon in Mumbai. When they were small and playing near a stream, he, Vijai (his sister, and Nalli, used to go near a stream to catch yellow flowers. He used to catch them easily, while she and Vijai failed all the time. Once she, jealous of Jai getting hold of the flowers, tries hard and succeeds. The flowers, stream, and Jai infuse self-confidence in her and Jai, at a later stage in life, reminds her of the episode when she is in doubt about her career in England as a surgeon which she wants to go ahead with but fears failure.

They envied him, she more than Budhi and Vijai. [...] Nalli watched him intently and tried again. The flowers burnt before her eyes, inches away—and then she lost balance and fell. She wept bitter tears of shame and pain, from a rapidly swelling nose. Vijai helped her wash while Jai stood watching.

'You can do it,' he said, when her sobs subsided.

...He was not teasing her. 'You're muddy and wet, your nose looks terrible,' he said. 'Best time to take another try.' [...] From the corner of her eyes she could see Jai watching. She pressed her feet firmly on the ground and tightened her belly. Holding

her breath, she leant forward and got five yellow flowers without touching a drop of water.

Jai's letter, reminding her of the flowers, heartened her. Yes, her hunger was greater than her fears. (HA, 178)

His marriage to Bela disturbs her and does not allow her to think of any match, yet she pursues her studies in England to start their dream project of building a hospital in Angheri that still lacked medical care and for which people had to travel to Mysore. Her father, who retires from the school, also desires to work towards it. However, his sudden death in an accident puts her in a dilemma. She is propelled to go forward without her father's death. She goes to Jai and speaks of the plan of building the hospital that he had spoken of as a child. He laughs off at the idea and asks her to be practical. He tells her clearly that he does not want to go back to village where there are no facilities. He had lived in poverty all his life and now he wants to lead a life of comfort and luxury. Jai also informs her that there is no money in village, while the patients in Bombay pay him well. As his materialistic needs cannot be fulfilled in a village like Angheri, he has nothing to do with it anymore.

...you lack ambition and scientific curiosity. Doctors need both. If you have any respect for the profession, you'll strike root in a city. You're impractical, that's been your problem, always.[...]

'You can't leave Bombay except for a very big reason. It is *the* place for a surgeon. We're worshipped here.'[...]

'We need money. What do we need gratitude for when we have money? Look at your father with his principles. I'm not sneering at him but what did he achieve? He got a lot gratitude but money would have served him better. Went around on a bicycle till the end.' (HA, 284-285)

Nalli, hurt, at the change in him is reminded of the time when he had hurt their favourite dog Rumba. Rumba was a dog that they (Jai, Vijai, and Nalli) played with when small. Once when, Nalli and Vijai are playing with Rumba, Jai, tired, pleaded them to shut up. When the three of did not listen, he tied Rumba to a tree. Rumba would not keep quiet, its commotion disturbed the beehive, and hundreds of bees were after Rumba. When Nalli and Vijai pleaded Jai to release him he

...covered his eyes again but Nalli pulled his arm away. 'Jai! Jai!' She hit and kicked and implored him to set the dog free, but Jai would not move. Vijai started to weep. Rumba barked pitifully until he was exhausted and his barks dwindled to a moan. Only then did Jai get up and untie him. The dog limped away, his face swollen, eyes almost hidden, looking at Jai with puzzlement. It was the last they saw of the dog.

...'It's only a dog,' he said. 'He wasn't letting me sleep.'

'I hope it happens to you one day,' Nalli said. Jai laughed a strange, strangled laugh and it incensed her. She hit him with the hand that held the bugri.[...]

'I'm bleeding!' Jai screamed. 'Do something!'

Nalli pushed him away and ran;[...]

The Rumba episode revealed to her a Jai she did not understand.[...] Even with his pet turtle Peshwa, Jai did strange things. He would tie a string with a stone to one leg and watch the turtle struggle to move. Peshwa was fond of greens[...] Jai would strew some a distance away and watch the turtle painfully moving forward, and this continued till Peshwa became lame. It was hard to figure out this madness[...] (HA, 115-116)

Similar to Jai, Frank as a child in Olive Schreiner's *From Man to Man; or, Perhaps Only...*, tortured Rebekah's cat. He held it by tail and would say, "I don't like cats," and when she cried saying, "you can't do that to them," he told her that he cares only a dog because it is "thoroughbred and wins prizes at shows and hunts well." (*From Man to Man; or, Perhaps Only...*, Olive Schreiner) Jai "limited by his limitless ambition (HA, 389p), the villagers distrust in her, her doubts about her strength and her fears, keep her away from Angheri for some time. However, the hunger bursting inside her, that she associates with the payasa, the sweet dish, on the day of Satyanarayana Puja, or when walking back home, looking at the hills, she felt during her school days, makes her return to her hills, hills of Angheri. Kavery Nambisan's trust in the Hills for guidance and source of inspiration is similar to Emerson's findings in his book, *Nature*, about Nature.

Nevertheless, in this world of "constructed-spaces" and "toxic-waste" to return to the world of abundance of space that holds Nanji's world would be futile because the non-places, even if willed, will not leave. The only resort for this is "bioregionalism" as suggested by Lawrence Buell. Buell, quoting Snyder, says that the program is not about building villages again, but "restoration of urban neighbourhood life and greening of the cities." (*Space, Place, and Imagination*, Buell, 83p) Echoing the same Michael Vincent McGinnis, *Freeman House and William Jordan III*, in the book *Bioregionalism* (edited by Michael Vincent McGinnis), speak about the restoration of earth through

bioregionalism, where people must rebuild their relationships with one another and the nature through education, cohabitation, hard work, and communion.

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Chapter – 5

ECO-FEMINISM

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Abstract

Ecofeminism is a branch of feminism that examines the connections between women and nature. The emphasis is on the ways both women and nature are treated by patriarchal society. The aim of ecofeminist is to reform environmentalism, empower the disenfranchised and restore the health of nature on this planet. This research paper is an attempt to study the various concepts of ecofeminism, the various movements, and their beliefs that proliferated over a period of time. The primary aim of ecofeminism is that it does not seek equality with men as such, but aim for liberation of women as women. They believe in interconnections and understanding these connections is necessary for an equitable change.

Ecofeminism emerged in the 1970s with the increasing consciousness of the connections between women and nature. French writer Francoise d' Eaubonne founded the Ecology-Feminism Center in Paris in 1972 and, in 1974, used the term, "ecofeminisme," in her book, *Feminism or Death*, in which she called upon women to lead an ecological revolution to save the planet. Such an ecological revolution would entail new gender relations between women and men and between human and nature.

Ecofeminism is rooted equally in environmentalism and women's liberation – two powerful movements that flowered in the 1970's. Combining the feminist and ecological perspectives, ecofeminism makes the women/nature connections: the domination, exploitation, and fear of both women and nature are characteristic of patriarchal thinking. The term "ecofeminism" intersects two critical perspectives – ecology and feminism. The word ecology is derived from biological science of natural environmental system. It is a movement of socio-economic and biological study to examine how human use of nature is causing pollution of soil, air and water which threaten the base of life.

Ecofeminism is a branch of feminism that examines the connections between women and nature. It is also called ecological feminism. Ecofeminism uses the basic feminist tenets of equality between genders, a revaluing of the non-patriarchal or nonlinear

structures, and a view of the world that respects organic processes, holistic connections and the merits of intuition and collaboration.

Feminism is a complex movement with multiple layers centralizes on full inclusion of women in both political and economic field against patriarchy, exploitation, oppression and violence against women. Ecofeminism is the outcome of amalgamation of feminism and environmentalism. Ecofeminism can be taken as an activist academic movement whose primary aim is to address and eliminate all forms of domination and recognizing and accepting the interdependence and connection that human have with Mother Earth.

In 1978, Susan Griffin's *Woman and Nature* captured the attention of the scholars, but the diffusion of the idea did not become apparent until after the conference on Ecofeminism "Women and life on Earth: A conference on Eco-feminism in the Eighties" was conducted. As the environmental movement along with environmental crises raised the consciousness of women to the decay of the earth, they began to see a parallel between the devaluation of the earth and the devaluation of women.

Ecofeminist activism grew during the 1980's and 1990's among women from the anti-nuclear and environmental movements. Mary Mellor says they draw "connections between exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression of women" (*Ecofeminism and Environmental ethics* 1999). It became a movement in 1980 as a result of a major conference that King and others organized on "Women and Life on Earth: Ecofeminism in the 80s" at Massachusetts. The conference explored the connections between feminism, militarism, health and ecology. It was followed by the formation of the 1980 Women's Pentagon Action in which two thousand women encircled the Pentagon to protest anti-life nuclear war and weapons development.

In 1987, in celebration of the twenty-fifth anniversary of Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*, Irene Diamond and Gloria Orenstein organized a conference on "Ecofeminist Perspectives: Culture, Nature, Theory" at the University of Southern California and in 1989 Judith Plant published a book of articles entitled, *Healing the Wounds: The Promise of Ecofeminism*. Rachel Carson, an American marine-biologist in her famous book 'Silent Spring' (1962), aroused a heart-touching voice of conscience in protest against the pollution and degradation of nature. Women in United States and other countries such as England, Australia, Sweden, Germany, India, Africa and Brazil continued to inject new life into ecofeminism through anthologies, conferences, and political actions that further developed the connections between women, nature, ecology, development, and threats to life on earth.

Karren Warren, one of the founders of Ecofeminist philosophy, claims that environmental damage is a form of violence. Ecofeminists such as Warren (1994) and Plumwood (1993) bring to bear social and philosophical insights which give the position far greater depth, scope and vigour. Val Plumwood's analysis merely differentiates men from women, human from nature and reason from emotion. She advocates both similarity and difference in the human-nature continuum. According to Warren (1994) both the arguments share a common "logic of domination." Karren Warren notes "Ecofeminism is an umbrella term for a wide variety of approaches. One may be a social ecofeminist, cultural ecofeminist, etc. What holds these disparate positions together is the claim that there are important connections between the domination of women and the domination of nature" (*Ecofeminism* 1997: 5).

According to ecofeminists, nature is a feminist issue. Ecofeminist philosophy extends familiar feminist critiques of social isms of domination (eg. sexism, racism) to nature. Greg Garrard writes "Ecofeminism calls for an end to all oppression, arguing that no attempts to liberate women will be successful without an equal attempt to liberate nature" (*Ecocriticism* 2004: 132). Ecofeminism adds a commitment to the environment and an awareness of the associations made between woman and nature. The philosophy emphasizes the ways both nature and women are treated by patriarchal society. Its practitioners advocate an alternative worldview that values the earth as sacred, recognizes humanity's dependency on the natural world, and embraces all life as valuable.

EcoFeminism believe in

- Conceptions of nature and of women have been linked.
- Women are closer to nature because of their reproductive characteristics.
- Earth as female, female as earth.
- Abuse of nature and women have gone hand in hand.
- To understand women's subordination an environmental analysis is required.
- There is a need to analyze the problem and devise an ideal which liberates both.

All oppressions such as race, gender, and environment are linked and need to be fought together.

Features of Ecofeminism

- Climate change, gender equality, and social injustice
- There is no single perspective.
- Multiplicity of voices, pluralistic.
- Need to recognize the validity of various views.
- Nonhierarchical.
- Nondualistic.
- Contextualist

WORLDWIDEECOFEMINISM MOVEMENTS

It is found that women worldwide rely on the natural environment more; they are more likely to be displaced by climate change. A number of ecological movements were lead by women in different parts of the world to recover the feminine principle. The existence of feminine principle is linked with diversity and sharing. The partnership between woman and nature ensures stability and sustainability. Further with the destructive activities going on endlessly against nature, ecological problems have arisen and these have led to ecological movements here and there. The only way to overcome this crisis is to recover the feminine principle. This principle enriches life in Nature and society.

- In India, they join the chipko movement to preserve precious fuel resources for their communities. It is a nonviolent social and ecological movement by rural villagers against commercial felling of trees. The movement originated in 1973, in the Himalayan region of Uttarakhand. Chipko is a Hindi word meaning “to hug”. The villagers of Alakananda valley having been denied access to a small number of trees with which to build agricultural tools were outraged when the government allotted a much larger plot to a sporting goods manufacturer. Chandi Prasad Bhatt led villagers into the forest and embraced the trees to prevent logging. After many days of protest the government cancelled the logging permit. The villagers wanted to protect the forest resources from destruction. Trees are important resources for food, fodder and timber. They also help to prevent soil erosion, flood and bring rainfall. The movement’s success came in 1980’s when Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi resulted in a 15 year ban on commercial felling in the Uttarakhand Himalayas.
- In Kenya Women of Green Belt movement band together to plant millions of trees in arid, degraded lands. Wangari Maathai, ecofeminist a recipient of Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 set up the movement in 1977. The movement encouraged women to plant trees in order to combat deforestation and environmental degradation.
- In Sweden, feminists prepare jam from berries sprayed with herbicides and offer a taste to members of parliament: they refuse.
- In Canada, women take to the streets to obtain signatures opposing uranium processing near their towns.

- In the United States, housewives organize local support to clean up hazardous waste sites.

All these actions are examples of a worldwide movement, increasingly known as ecofeminism dedicated to the continuation of life on earth. The movement generally claims that ecology is a feminist issue and that feminism is an ecological issue. It is an inclusive movement.

The Ecofeminist argues that man distinguishes men from women on the grounds of some alleged quality such as larger brain size and then assumes that this distinction confers on men superiority over women. Ecofeminism argues that there is a parallel between women and nature that comes from their shared history of oppression by a patriarchal society.

Ecofeminists claim to be part of a distinct social movement. They feel that men dominate women and humans dominate nature. Naturally, then women and the environmentalist should be united in their struggle. The connections between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature are highlighted in order to understand why environment is a feminist issue, as well as why feminist issues can be addressed in terms of environmental concerns. Nature has always been thought of in feminine terms, because of her tenderness, fertility and generosity in nourishment. Nature is described in motherly terms in many cultures and languages. Moreover, woman more than man is considered to be closer to nature: because both share the pangs of birthing and caring. The ecofeminists, analyzing these parallels, see a process of devaluation of both 'nature' and 'women'. This exploitative attitude, typically patriarchal, seems to have arisen over 5,000 years ago.

Ecofeminists believe we can learn from pre-patriarchal societies where women were valued. They believe that there was a time before written history, some 250,000 years ago, when co-operation, not competition, was valued. During this period female deities were widely worshipped and societies were more women-centered.

The central premise of ecofeminism remains to be the suppression of women and nature. The dominations of women and nature are linked in various ways e.g. historically, materially, culturally, or conceptually. Charlene Spretnak sees ecofeminism as one of the "new ecologies" that include deep ecology, bioregionalism and animal rights.

In 1998, Greta Gaard noted that "Ecofeminism is not a single master theory and its practitioners have different articulations of their social practice" (*Ecological Politics* 268). Ten years later the branches of ecofeminism continue to expand and now they include spiritual, social, radical and Marxist forms. More than a theory about feminism and environmentalism, or women and nature, as the name might imply, ecofeminism

approaches the problems of environmental degradation and social injustice from the premise that how we treat nature and how we treat each other are inseparably linked. Ecofeminism is a feminist approach to environmental ethics. Ecofeminists advocate some form of an environmental ethic that deals with the twin oppressions of the domination of women and nature through an ethic of care and nurture that arises out of women's culturally constructed experiences. Ethics begin with our essential interrelatedness. We need to discover our actual reality. We need to recognize our utter dependence on the great life-producing matrix of the planet in order to earn to reintegrate our human systems of production, consumption and waste into the ecological patterns by which nature sustains life.

Dr. Vandana Shiva complements the idea of interconnectedness of women and nature. As a philosopher, eco-feminist and environmental activist, she is one of the original tree huggers from the 1970's. She won the prestigious Sydney Peace Prize 2010 for her commitment to environmental justice. She says "Ecofeminists have described a number of connections between the oppressions of women and of nature that are significant to understanding why the environment is a feminist issue, and conversely, why feminist issues can be addressed in terms of environmental concerns" (*Ecofeminism* 1993: 13). According to Shiva (1989) "Ecofeminists link their project as much to the politically oriented positions associated with social ecology and eco-marxism as to ethically and spiritually oriented deep ecology" (15).

Vandana Shiva an environment activist, ecologist, ecofeminist and social activist. She participated in the Chipko movement in 1970s and learnt to protest biodiversity and biodiversity based living economies. She conducted campaigns to prevent clear-cut logging and the construction of large dams. She contributed intellectually in the fields of biodiversity, biotechnology, bioethics, genetic engineering and intellectual property rights.

India has a long tradition of venerating Nature as 'Adi Shakti', the primordial power. Nature as Prakriti is known as producer of life and provider of sustenance. In the essay 'Women in Nature' Vandana Shiva explores the unique place of women in the environment both as its savers and as victims of ecological mal development. Though Nature manifests herself in diverse forms, living and non-living, they are only a duality in unity.

With the advent of Western Industrial culture, Nature's wealth and women's role has been marginalized and her work has been turned unproductive. Nature and women are affected due to the new culture with the destructive activity going on endlessly against

nature. There is loss of bio diverse resources in the world so the discovery of feminine principle has been inevitable to maintain sound eco-system.

According to Vandana Shiva nature is equated with the feminine principle: its degradation, colonization and its destruction all in the name of progress. She believes that rural women understand best the basic principles of how to nurture and manage land and forests. Thus she insists on the combined role of women and nature for building an environmentally sustainable society. Also while expressing her views about women and nature, Vandana Shiva takes into account various aspects like mythological, social, ecological, biological, feminist etc, in support of her argument.

Types of Ecofeminism

Liberal Ecofeminism: An objective to reform environmentalism is to alter human relations with nature from within existing structures of governance through the passage of new laws and regulations. Liberal Ecofeminism characterizes the history of feminism from its beginnings in the seventeenth century until the 1960s. Liberal ecofeminist considers environmental problems result from the overly rapid development of natural resources and the failure to regulate pesticides and other environmental pollutants.

Cultural Ecofeminists celebrate the relationship between woman and nature through the revival of ancient rituals centered on Goddess worship the moon, the animals and female reproductive system. A vision in which nature is held in esteem as mother and goddess is a source of inspiration and empowerment for many ecofeminists. Cultural ecofeminist philosophies embrace intuition an ethic of caring and web like human nature relationship. Many women activists argue that male-designed technologies neglect the effect of nuclear radiation, pesticides, hazardous wastes and household chemicals on women's reproductive organs and on the ecosystem. They protest against radioactivity wastes from nuclear weapons, power plants, and bombs as a potential cause of birth defects, cancers and the elimination of life on earth.

Cultural ecofeminism analyses environmental problems from within a critique of patriarchy and offers alternatives that could liberate both women and nature. The majority of activists in the grassroots movement against toxics, are women. Many women involved when they experienced miscarriages or their children suffered birth defects or contracted leukemia or other forms of cancer.

To cultural ecofeminists the way out of this dilemma is to elevate and liberate woman and nature through direct political action.

Social Ecofeminists envision the restructuring of society as humane decentralized communities. They advocate the liberation of women through overturning economic and social hierarchical that turn all aspects of life into a market society that today even invades the womb. Both women and men are capable of ecological ethic based on

caring. They have participated in direct actions and political coalitions with otherfeminist and have organized conferences to protest militarism, sexism and racism. Social ecofeminist analyses in capitalist patriarchy. They question how patriarchal relations of reproduction reveal the domination of women by men, and how capitalist relations of production reveal the domination of nature by men. It envisions a society of decentralized communities. In such communities women emerge as free participants in public life. Their perspective offers a standpoint to analyze social and ecological transformation and suggest social actions that will lead to the sustainability of life.

To conclude, Ecofeminist school of thought believes that women have a special relationship with nature by virtue of their biological role and nature has to be liberated from the repressive male ethos. They believe that social transformation includes intellectual transformation. They believe that what ecology teaches about nature is equally relevant to humans, since humans are part of nature and participants in the ecological process.

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Chapter – 6

ECOFEMINISM AND LITERATURE

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In the ancient years Ecofeminism has become an increasingly important field in both contemporary feminist and environmental studies. Although, as Diamond and Orenstein note, ecofeminism is really ‘a new term for an ancient wisdom’ (Mikes and Shiva 1993: 13), it first came to prominence in the early 1980s, its bases in feminist philosophy, environmental activism and the European and American peace movements of the late 1970s. The term itself was first used by Françoise Eaubonne in 1980 (Mies and Siva 1993: 13) and was increasingly adopted by both scholars and environmental activists. Organised in response to the Three Mile Island nuclear disaster, the 1980 ‘Women and Life on Earth: A Conference on Eco-Feminism’ focused on ‘the connections between feminism, militarization, healing and ecology’ (Mies and Shiva 1993: 14). The adoption of the term had also been preceded by many women poetry and fiction in the 1960s and 70s, and has gained increasing prominence through the work of philosophers Val Plumwood and Karen Warren. It has also been adopted by other disciplines through the writing and activism of Arundhati Roy and Vandana Shiva.

Ecofeminism stresses the indissoluble connectedness – both physical and conceptual – of the earth itself, and all life on it. Humans, as a part of this community depend on earth and sea, and the life this generates for survival; but they are even more fundamentally of it, one component part of the living whole. As Val Plumwood notes, the basic interconnectedness of all matter and psyche is such a ‘truism’ that it is puzzling that it should need to be remarked at all. ‘But the reason why this message of continuity and dependency is so revolutionary in the context of the modern world is that the dominant strands of Western culture have for so long denied it, and have given us a model of human identity as only minimally and accidentally connected to the earth’ (Plumwood 1993: 6). Even though we all have a ‘formal knowledge of evolutionary

biology', this disconnection 'remains deeply and fatally entrenched in modern conceptions of the human and of nature,' continuing to 'naturalize domination in both human and non-human spheres' (1993: 6).

Ecofeminists, however, reject the notion that 'man's freedom and happiness depend on an ongoing process of emancipation from nature, and an independence from and dominance over natural processes by the power of reason and rationality' (Mies and Shiva 1993:6). The tenets of Enlightenment reason rely for their continuing power on a number of linked and hierarchized dualisms: nature and culture; black and white; civilization and savagery; the human and the animal. As Mies and Shiva argue, 'wherever women acted against ecological destruction or/and the threat of atomic annihilation, they immediately became aware of the connection between patriarchal violence against women, other people and nature' (14). The 'corporate and military warriors' aggression against the environment was perceived almost physically as an aggression against our female body' (14). To stop the exploitation and despoliation of, in Plumwood's phrase, the 'more than human' world, radical changes in Western and Western Derived capitalist thinking are required. Central to such rethinking is the dismantling of those dangerous and divisive dualisms of patriarchal economies whose modern roots in Western cultures are traceable to the dictates of reason. Reason is interrogated not, as Plumwood stresses, to instantiate the unreasonable, but to understand the historically and philosophically contingent bases of the subjugation of women, non western people and the natural world.

Western rationality, which still assumes that the basis of human civilization consists in a progressive detachment from 'nature', also dominated the colonial period. The more closely associated with nature non-European peoples and women were considered to be, the more 'inherently' inferior they were; inferiority ensured and justified patriarchal/Western civilization's destruction and domination of other lands and peoples. Land itself, cast as a female and 'new' to Europeans, was 'ripe' for conquering and taming.

The legacy of the dominant discourse, as ecofeminists recognize, is environmental devastation and on-going destruction of plants, animals and other subject peoples in the name of capitalist 'progress' identified as 'civilization.' Ecofeminism thus seeks to establish – or in the case of some colonized cultures, to re-establish, a sense of interconnectedness of being, through ontological change and political activism replicating the philosophy of connectedness in an amalgam of theory and practice. As its affirmation of the shared ground of all being suggests, ecofeminism (especially in the United States) has strong spiritual as well as political and scholarly dimensions; modern retrieval of the traditional confluence of material and spiritual being intimately connected to place and the earth in many pre-colonized

cultures.

Chapter – 7

ECOFEMINIM: IT'S DYNAMICS

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Abstract:

The present paper *Ecofeminim: It's Dynamics* focuses on the major movements which strengthened ecofeminism. As women are the torchbearers of the movement the relationship between Nature and women is the aspect to be studied. The equality betwixt the two certainly to be explored so as the significance of the women in the movement can be understood in a right way. The works of Vandana Shiva, Maria Mines and other notable writers highlighted the reality of the aspects of Ecofeminism.

Key words: Ecofeminism

One can observe that Nature has its own equilibrium which needs to be undisturbed. Any disturbance results in natural furies. The exploitation of animals and natural resources has drawn the attention of academicians and social activists. Anita Singh in her book, *Stairway to the Stars* observes, “An influential body of opinion all over the world is now stressing that the cause of the civilization crisis lies in our disconnectedness with Nature”.

In India, Nature is identified as Prakriti, in the feminine form. Ecofeminism is an intrinsic part of Indian cultural ethos. Writings on Nature are indispensable part of Indian literature and the relationship between Nature and literature could be ascertained to our epic tradition. Art and literature are replete with portrayals of physical environment, and the connectivity between Nature and human beings since pre-historic times. Evidence of environmental consciousness is also evident in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas, and the Epics. The Ramayana and the Mahabharata both deal with the interconnectedness of forest life with human life.

Nature in Western Literature

In the West, an ecological consciousness is evident in the works of early Greek philosophers such as Hippocrates, Aristotle, and Theophrastus. Besides, American transcendentalists' writings like R. W. Emerson's *Nature* (1836), Margaret Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes* (1844), and Henry David Thoreau's *Walden* (1854) have

highlighted the primacy of Nature. The British Romantics have celebrated Nature in their works.

Nature in Contemporary Literature in India

Contemporary India has contributed an indigenous discourse on ecofeminism. Vandana Shiva is credited as a major contributor to this field. Her notable works are *Ecofeminism* (1993), *The Violence of the Green Revolution* (1993), *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India* (2010), *Monoculture of the Mind: Perspectives on Biodiversity and Biotechnology* (1993), and *Biopiracy* (2012).

Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) represents the relation of environmental deterioration and women's exploitation through her women characters and the ecofeminist point of view. Her novel *The Coffer Dams* (1969), revolves around a dam, where the female characters are represented as Nature lovers. Anita Desai's *Cry, The Peacock* (1963) evidently pictures the pivotal connection between Nature and human beings and Nature's fundamental relationship with women. In *A River Sutra* (1993) Gita Mehta links the river Narmada to the main story and to the six sub-stories. Arundhati Roy's Booker Prize-winning novel, *The God of Small Things* (1997), talks about tiny insects, and the world of Nature in many instances. Sunetra Gupta's five novels are finely connected through the metaphor of the incessant rain. Kiran Desai's *The Inheritance of Loss* (2006) opens with a picturesque description of the landscape.

A French feminist Francoise d'Eaubonne introduced the term 'Ecofeminism' in 1974 in her book "*Feminism or Death*" (1980) to bring political awareness and concerns towards ecological revolution. With Aldo Leopold's essay "*Land Ethic*" (1949), people started to focus on the community of all non-human parts of the land which consist of animals, plants, land, air and water, and with the works of other major personalities in this field.

The late 1970s and early 1980s saw the emergence of modern ecofeminism in the United States. The 1980s are remembered as a pivotal decade for environmental women since the word "ecofeminism" was coined in 1980, coincidentally with two significant events. The conference "Women and Life on Earth: Ecofeminism in the 1980s," held in April 1980 in Amherst, Massachusetts, was the first in a series of ecofeminism conferences. The Women's Pentagon Action took place in Washington, D.C. in November 1980. 'Women and Life on Earth' assembled to protest the war, militarism, nuclear weapons, and their environmental consequences.

Women of all continents have participated in environmental movements which include preservation and conservation. Rachel Carson's '*Silent Spring*' and Terry Tempest '*Refuge*' are the most influential works which created a platform for change in the situation of environmental harm.

A sizable number of works have been produced in literature based on ecofeminism. They include Sherry B. Ortner's "*Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?*" (1974), Rosemary Radford Ruether's, *New Woman/ New Earth* (1975), Val Plumwood's *Feminism and Mastery of Nature* (1993) and *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* (2002), Susan Griffin's *Women and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (1980), Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology* (1978), Starhawk's *Webs of Power: Notes from the Global Uprising* (2002), Carolyn Merchant's *The Death of Nature* (1980), *Longing for Running Water: Ecofeminism and Liberation* by Ivone Gebara (1999), Mary Mellor's *Breaking the Boundaries: Towards a Feminist Green Socialism* (1992), Karen J. Warren's *Ecological Feminism* (1994), and *Ecological Feminist Philosophies* (1996), Carol J. Adams' *Neither Man nor Beast: Feminism and the Defense of Animals* (1994) and *The Sexual Politics of Meat* (2010), Greta Gaard's *Ecofeminism: Women, Animals, Nature* (1993) and *Ecofeminism and Native American Cultures in Ecofeminism* (1993).

The Green Belt movement in Kenya in 1977 started by Professor Wangari Maathai and Lois Gibbs' Love Canal movement in New York in 1978 with the object of protecting Nature from the toxic dumping and its drastic effects on children, women and many other effects are some of the instances where we can observe women playing a prominent role in protecting not only the environment but also the other members of the non-human community. Women's Pentagon Actions in 1980 and 1981, the Akwesasne Mother's Milk Project in 1985 and the Greening of Harlem Coalition in 1989 are a few seminal ecofeminist movements.

Eco Movements in India

In India, the Chipko movement began in 1970 to protect forests from deforestation. The Chipko movement in northern India draws on the principles of Mahatma Gandhi and the ideals of Indian philosophy. Both men and women actively participated in these movements in order to resist environmentally destructive industrial forestry and various development schemes at the expense of local people. Such movements have occurred from time to time on the earth in the later decades. In 1974, Gaura Devi and a group of village women in Reni village, Chamoli district, Uttarakhand, ceased the felling of trees. Through a four-day vigil that had them hugging the trees, these women prevented trees from being felled by a contractor assigned by the State Forest Department for supplying wood to a sports goods manufacturer in Allahabad. In Karnataka, the Appiko Movement laid the foundations for a movement to save the Western Ghats. It created consciousness of the dangers of overexploitation of the ecosystem. It moved on to popularize fuel-efficient stoves, gohar gas plants, green energy, and organic agriculture to bring down firewood consumption and promote rational use of natural resources. Appiko's green movement has sparked similar activities in all of the southern states, as well as Maharashtra. Women, alongside males, played an active and vital role in the Appiko Movement, which aimed to save the environment.

Ecofeminist activism within the country was inaugurated by two women-led struggles, namely, the Chipko of the Northern Himalayas and the Silent Valley agitation of Kerala. Ecofeminism substantiates its theoretical base from the philosophical concepts of the ancient traditions of the world. Since the 1970s women were instrumental in organizing a large number of protests against environmental hazards, irrespective of colour, caste, and regional boundaries. It is said that the Bhopal disaster of 1984 marked the beginning of modern environmentalism in India, and now, the theory opens new frontiers in literary criticism, providing an equal platform for feminist and ecological concerns. All these ecological movements were led by mostly women and they acted non-violently.

Ecofeminism by Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva (1993) analyses the connection between patriarchy and environmental destruction. Vandana Shiva is a physicist with expertise in ecology and environmental policy. Maria Mies is a feminist social scientist. Colonization, reproduction, biodiversity, food, soil, sustainable development, are some of the issues they discussed in it.

Whenever women protested against ecological destruction, atomic destruction of life on the Earth, new developments in biotechnology, genetic engineering, and reproductive technology, they discovered the connections between patriarchal domination and violence against women, colonised non-western, non-White peoples, and Nature, according to Manisha Rao in her article "Ecofeminism at the Crossroads in India: A Review" (2012). It led to the realisation that women's liberation is inextricably linked to the larger struggle to preserve Nature and life on the planet (125). Historically, there are certain basic reasons for the suppression of women as well as Nature. Women have an intimate knowledge of Nature that has helped sustain life. With the colonial intervention and capitalist development, production in traditional societies was disturbed. It resulted in a capitalistic economy, dominated by men in charge of the production of exchange commodities.

The multiple configurations of ecofeminism reflect the various ways of analyzing the connections between women and Nature. It also focuses on the differences in the nature of women's oppression and solutions to them, the theory of human nature, and the notions of freedom, equality, and epistemology on which depend various feminist theories. In an article *Our Wounded Mother*, Vandana Shiva expresses the contemporary predicament that science's mechanistic paradigm, combined with the economy's capitalist paradigm, and is sniffing out life in every ecosystem and life form it comes into contact with. Nature dies at a faster rate as the economy grows. We ignore the Mother Earth's rules, laws, and limits, pumping pollution into the air and rivers, mining every mineral from her body, chopping down every tree for flyovers and highways, and bulldozing every farm for concrete housing and malls. Man's inheritance from massacring Mother Earth includes dead rivers, terminator seeds, toxic food, and

climate chaos. With melting glaciers, rising seas, and vanishing biodiversity, we may witness the serious destruction of the conditions for human life on Earth within our lifetimes. Or, if we remember that we are children of another Earth, we can turn things around by remembering that we must protect her in order to protect future generations and ourselves. (*The Times of India*: New Delhi/Chandigarh May 12, 2007)

Ecofeminism is a philosophy that recognizes interconnectedness among women, Nature, and other marginalized groups. It asserts the rights of Mother Earth and all her oppressed children. As an ideology, ecofeminism guides human beings to understand the benefits of establishing gender equity and sustainable development. As a life-affirming school of thought, ecofeminism inspires human minds to realize the 'spiritual' element in all living creatures. As a movement, it interrogates the problems that women and Nature face in an age of exploitation, destruction, and indifference and motivates human beings to integrate their collective strength.

Conclusion

Eco-feminists believe that the values and characteristics such as reciprocity, nurturing, and cooperation are "feminine" and are largely present both among Women and in Nature. Vandana Shiva has advocated it in all her works; *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India* (1988), *The Violence of the Green Revolution* (1989), *Ecofeminism* (1993), *Monocultures of the Mind: Perspectives on Biodiversity, Biotechnology and Agriculture* (1993), and *Biopiracy: The plunder of Nature and Knowledge* (2011). She opines that women have a special connection to the environment through their daily interactions and this connection has been ignored gradually. She further stresses that the capitalist reductionist paradigm ignored the alternative modes of the economy where wealth is in partnership with Nature and women have been experts in their own right of holistic and ecological knowledge of Nature's process. She adds that patriarchy has labeled the subordinate groups as unproductive.

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Chapter – 8

ECOFEMINISM - THE TITIVATING THEORY OF THE PRESENT ERA

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Abstract

This paper presents a glimpse of the most titivating theory, Ecofeminism, its ideas, key strands and the words and interpretations of various people of Ecofeminism. Though emerged as a third wave feminism during the twentieth century, its fine roots trace back to the Elizabethan age and looking through the works of the Bard of the age, Shakespeare and assumed different shades in different periods in a literary history. The relationship of women and nature, the domination of man upon nature and women is discussed and disclosed through the comments of ecofeminists *Vandana Shiva*, *Ursula Le Guin*, *James* etc., and how far must Ecofeminism attempt to satisfy its goals.

Keywords: Ecofeminism, Man, Nature, Women

You are not Atlas carrying the world on your shoulder. It is good to remember that the planet is carrying you. **Vandana Shiva**

Number of literary theories emanated from time immemorial focusing itself to solve various problems and acting as a strong foundation to antiquity to learn and cherish and attempt to apply it in various perspectives. Ecofeminism is one such theory which originated in late 1970's but its genesis can be traced back to Elizabethan age. Ecofeminism, an untried amalgamation of ecology, nature, bio diversity, gender, women and femininity emerged as a weapon to fight against gender bias and nature exploitation.

The primitive man used to worship nature as God and believed that if some wrong is done to nature will seek his own demise. Such was the belief during the time and, to put it in a frank way, was really beneficial to the conservation of nature. Based on these belief and devotion the treatment of nature was done in a meritorious way and nature was in fact preserved with utmost care and devotion. The

mother nature enjoyed at the fullest in the hands of primitive man and in turn gave the unseen happiness to its creation-MAN. Till such time man was under the fear and care of nature with an hidden and unspoken instinct that nature destroys him whenever he

commits mistakes or goes wrong. These beliefs and fears are even surfaced in ancient mythologies and legendary stories, the Sanskrit terminology of the words PANCHABHOOTAS for nature, meaning five kinds of superpowers to control mankind itself signifies its own importance. Not only in Hindu mythology but also in other cultures and mythologies nature played a prominent role in the lives of the people and it was raised and viewed as a superpower to safeguard and protect their lives. Nature was seen as an elixir of life and submitting to nature was considered as the only way to escape from all sorrows of life. Nature was held in an esteemed vestige and reverence was given and worshipped as God.

Incidentally, changes occurred on all fronts in the name of revolution and development was achieved at a tremendous pace. Progress and advancement went proportional with the population in order to meet the basic necessities of man....namely food, clothing and shelter. The more the population increased, the more were the need and more were the revolution. As the revolution reached at its maximum, man was happy with his achievement of conquering nature but unknowingly was placed at the verge of failure. Man pats on his back without being aware that he is tapping his own doom.

When the forest is destroyed, when the river is dammed, when the biodiversity is stolen, when fields are waterlogged or turned saline because of economic activities, it is a question of survival for these people. So our environmental movements have been justice movements. (vandana shiva)

Let's take the history of women, the so called second or weaker sex, her place in history, mythology and legend. Created to increase the number of mankind this gender was treated in a unique way in ancient times. Right from Eve to the present day working women her position, value, treatment, oppression remained unchanged and perennial. Neither was treated as God nor was respected but just looked upon as a vehicle for the promotion of mankind and in fact as an unnecessary creature on earth. Dating back to Elizabethan age, women were viewed as ghosts, witches and evil spirits created out of sin and born to destroy earth. Domination and discrimination began right from that age and males searched for different ways to destroy the other gender which is reflected in many of the works of literature. Though crowned as queen, Elizabeth was undergoing the regular responsibilities of child rearing etc as other women do. Even she believed that women are inferior to men

In the words of Susan Shapiro:

“As women strived to reject the concept of male domination, they not only succeeded in gaining recognition from their male counterparts, but also influenced culture, as it also became a part of theater art through the works of playwrights such as William Shakespeare”

In Elizabethan time, women were considered as the weaker sex and dangerous, because their sexuality was supposedly mystic and therefore feared by men. Women of that era were supposed to represent virtues like obedience, silence, sexual chastity, piety, humility, constancy, and patience. All these virtues, of course, have their meaning in relationship to men. The role allocation in Elizabethan society was strictly regulated; men were the breadwinners and woman had to be obedient housewives and mothers.

Jennifer A. Munroe is a professor of English at UNC Charlotte.”, has examined the relation between ecofeminism and Shakespeare plays.

“By looking closely at Shakespeare’s works, Author Jennifer Munroe looks at both representations of “environment” that might provide insight into these relations in early modern English history -- especially those related to gendered identity -- and at how the way people understood their relationship to “environment” 400 years ago might help us redress our own environmental crises today.”

From this it is clear that the seeds of ecofeminism were sown some 400 years ago but was not identified as a special literary theory. In every play of Shakespeare, environment and ecological relations of man, women and animals was identified in some context or other.

“In Elizabethan time, women were considered as the weaker sex and dangerous, because their sexuality was supposedly mystic and therefore feared by men. Women of that era were supposed to represent virtues like obedience, silence, sexual chastity, piety, humility, constancy, and patience. All these virtues, of course, have their meaning in relationship to men. The role allocation in Elizabethan society was strictly regulated; men were the breadwinners and woman had to be obedient housewives and mothers.”

A close scrutiny of his plays reveals the part played by nature on humans especially women. The character and portrayal of Ophelia in Hamlet, Miranda in tempest so on and so forth. From this we can understand that even from the period of Shakespeare there was an inherent connections between nature and women. Even in the portrayal of women in his plays, their lives and perceptions were in such a way that they were toys and matter of criticism in the eyes and hands of males.

Ursula Leguin has explained in her chapter, ‘Women/Wilderness’ that Man is the Master, and he is the head of the world and there is no place for others (women) and even raises himself that even for God, He (man) is His right hand.

“Civilized Man says: I am Self, I am Master, all the rest is other-outside, below, underneath, sub-servient, I own, I use, I explore, I exploit, I control. What I do is what matters. What I want is what matter is for. I am that I am, and the rest is women and wilderness, to be used as I see fit.” With God, and his right hand Man, at the “centre of the universe”-conceived of as the hierarchical Chain of Being-there is no

room for anything else in the driver's seat. Thus decisions made from this lofty position reflects only him-a lonely and isolated character, dissociated from all the rest of life by his own self-importance(pg.no.126-127) (Eco-feminism-A Response to Fear and Alienation,from Healing the Wounds.)

From the above lines it is understood that the tendency developed by men towards women and nature is highly sceptical. In this context, theories such as Ecofeminism must come as a counter response to hamper such tendencies and relieve the world from such monopolies and preserve and uphold that both earth and women are of basic importance without which, a harmonic balance can't be achieved. Women around the world of different cultures experience oppression from the 'other' in different ways. A clear nuance must emerge that the planet is wholesome identity of man, woman and nature. Only these elements must work in complimentary among each other such that harmony will be prevailed. This notion must be remembered not only among men but also in women as well. The key strands of Ecofeminism attempts to instill this concepts in all the minds and to achieve this harmony so that the planet shall be restored to posterity to enjoy all the fruits and consequences which was enjoyed by the people before the idea of exploitation and oppression were existed. To sum up in the words of Vandana Shiva

“The liberation of the earth, the liberation of women, the liberation of all humanity is the next step of freedom we need to work for, and it's the next step of peace that we need to create”

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Chapter – 9

A Dalit Women Journey from Frailty to Solidity: A Study of Bama's Karukku

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Abstract

Dalit identity is one of the major themes of Indian Literature in the postcolonial period. Both Indian and English literature. Dalit identity is variously interpreted from different angles. The present paper aims how the weak women build his character and morals. Bama's writing is not a simple protest writing but they have great literary ingredients. These type of writing Bama can truly be called as the celebration of Dalit identity. The ancient wisdom of Dalits is presented through these writings. Dalit literature has a special vision which does not merely highlight the suffering of Dalits but it presents Dalits as a major part of our society. The contribution of these people is often not highlighted as most of the mainstream writers present the victimization of Dalits by ignoring the Dalits pride that exists among them. Bama, of the most prominent women Dalit writers in contemporary period, depicts the greatness of these people by exploring their unique knowledge and wisdom and portrays them as important stakeholders in our society. The narration of Dalit culture in Bama's writing and its historical significance is a step forwarding strengthening Dalit identity as she spearheads these celebration of Dalitness with out the patronage of elite class.

Keywords: Dalit Literature, Dalit Women, Oppression, Discrimination, Exploitation, Violence, Untouchability.

Dalit collected works immersed as a part of the social reformation movement. During the 20th century, in the age of post-modernism and post-colonialism, the world faced a democratic revolution that necessitated a society with equal human rights. It brought forth the marginal,

aboriginal, and the oppressed. The new waves of humanism spread across India also and many social revolutionaries started movements against the denounced social practices. The movement also challenged the hierarchy of the caste system which is believed to be a root cause of the subjugation of millions of Dalits for centuries.

Karukku is a significant novel which reflects the sufferings of Dalit women in a patriarchal and caste-based society. At every moment the central character undergoes some sort of patriarchal or outdated sufferings. This kind of travails recurrently pushes women into the class of subalterns. Wherever Dalit women go, they are encircled by many circumstances evolved out of traditional caste backdrops. On the other side, at home, they are bound with male-controlled norms. They are trapped with many societal and patriarchal rules. It eventually drags them into the class of 'other'. Bama portrays the sad reality of Dalit women in the select text. She explores her own story of suffering which is about patriarchy and culture set in Dalit background, Bama writes in the novel,

"In this society if you are born into a low caste, you are forced to live a life of humiliation and degradation until your death. Even after death, caste-difference does not disappear.....If you are born into a low caste, every moment of your life is a moment of struggle" (Holmstrom, 26, 27).

Conservatively, the structure of society is divided into such an entity that does not allow the lower castes to become independent. In this system, the lower castes are always treated as the worst human beings. They are not given that required chance to march forward. In the text the protagonist belongs to the Paraya caste, a lower caste group generally found in the southern state of Tamil Nadu. They are surrounded by many higher caste groups like Nadar, Naicker, Chettiyaar, Aasaari, Thevar, etc. Bama narrates the traditional and cultural harassment done to them by the higher caste groups. The Paraya caste women are always bound to display their regard and servitude towards upper caste people and also at their own homes. Dalit women suffer in two ways. As Chandra Talpade Mohanty in her essay, *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses*, describes the double colonisation of third world women. At first, they suffer from western colonisation, secondly, they suffer from existing patriarchy and tradition at their own homes. In a society where caste elements are so rigidly maintained, it left no place free for women. The line which has been drawn in between Dalit women and higher caste is not just a line. It is but the line which divides whole humanity into certain segments. This line is like an electric shock produced out of a thunderstorm that destroys anything that comes before it. Bama refers to her childhood experience in the novel,

"The elder went straight up to the Naicker, bowed low and extended the packet towards him, cupping the hand that held the string with his other hand.....He said everybody believed that Naickers were upper caste, and therefore must not touch Parayas" (Holmstrom, 15).

For the first time, Bama saw this Paraya elder bowing down before a Naicker. This scene entirely changed the thought of the author. At her very young age when she did not even know about the caste system and untouchability, she had seen it, experienced it and been

humiliated. The cruelty and domination of the upper caste people have always been catastrophic to the lower castes. They have been controlling the Dalits in every possible way. Dalit women have to face every kind of exploitation. They are bound to follow the caste instructions strictly. Social discrimination is a serious issue in Dalit society. On the other hand, untouchability is frequently detected in the text which further fuels the discrimination. In the text *Sangati*, when Bama questions her grandmother about their exploitation, she answers that they are bound to follow because of their caste and money power which the Dalits do not have. They can't fight back with them because sooner or later they will have to go for wage work at their homes.

Generally, upper-caste people are directly harsh to Dalit women. But, many a time slaughters on Dalit men further affects the lives of Dalit women more severely. Bama reflects a similar incident from her childhood past. It was such a horrible incident where all the men in her village had to hide in the jungle for many days.

"All of a sudden a huge gang of policemen came out of the Chaaliyar settlement, batons in hand, drove our men back ruthlessly, pitilessly beating up those they caught, before arresting them....Outside, we heard the thud-thud of police boots stamping up and down, the sharp sounds of blows as our men were struck repeatedly, and the yells, 'Ayyo Amma', of unendurable pain" (Holmstrom, 34, 35).

Caste differences are so dominant that it totally attacked the whole elder males of the village. The upper caste groups are very aggressive towards the Dalits. It was for a small piece of cemetery land, they attempted to kill the Dalits. These upper-caste groups have huge areas of land but they too attempted to grab a small cemetery ground from the poor Dalits. Societal rules have positioned the Dalits in a subordinate place. The governments and organisations also have a distasteful focus on lower castes groups. In the text, the policemen who are called the preserver of laws blindly follow and side with the higher castes. The whole police team is being feasted to arrest the Dalit men. In such a desolate situation what could these women do, where shall they go for help when everything has turned against them? They become silent before the situations only hoping for a good turn every other day.

Karukku depicts the sufferings of women in the Dalit community popular multiple ways right from a young girl to an old woman. This text questions several patriarchal rules existing in our society that oppress women. Through this text, Bama explores the hardships and everyday reality of Dalit women. She projects herself questioning various post-colonial and traditional institutions that oppress the Dalits. Women as depicted in the text are wage workers at the same time they play a crucial role in supporting the family through their everyday income. But they have been not given a proper status and recognition in the family. In the workplace, women are not paid a genuine price for their work whereas men are paid much more compared to them. Furthermore, the money which is earned by women is responsibly utilized and spent on household affairs to run the family. But men can spend their money according to their wishes without any proper interest of the family. Such limitations bound women to hold the responsibilities of a family where men stay irresponsible in family matters. Sexual harassment is another significant issue projected in the texts. Women are considered no more than a sexual object. Bama expresses the sexual exploitation of Dalit women at the workplace as well as at

their homes. At the workplace, they face sexual harassment at the hands of upper-caste men. In her seminal text *Sangati*, Mariamma is misbehaved by Kumarasami Ayya near the pump set, but when he realizes his fault, he quickly informs the village headman and manipulates everyone for his reputation. "By this time, Kumarasami Ayya, afraid that his reputation might be in ruins, hurried to the village, and went and complained to the headman of the paraiyya community, the naattaamai" (Holmstrom, 20). In the meeting, everyone tried to blame her for the misbehavior. On the other hand, women are sexually harassed by their own husbands at home. In the evening, when they return from the workplace with full tiredness, soon after finishing all the household works they have to surrender their tired bodies to their husbands.

Poverty and hunger are the two worst evils of every society. These have always been issues for the Dalits from ages. It is poverty that compels Dalits to stoop before the upper caste people. Furthermore, it is the hunger that turns Dalits to do the filthiest works at the homes of the upper castes. Namdeo Dhasal, in his poem *Hunger*, explains the sufferings of Dalits due to hunger. It also reflects the urging angry and resistance of Dalits from hunger. The question of survival becomes more important than anything. Either it may be through accepting physical torture of the upper caste or by cleaning wastages at their homes. In the text *Karukku*, Bama has portrayed a series of incidents that reflect Dalit poverty and hunger.

"Most of the land belonged to the Naicker community. Each Naicker's fields were spread over many miles. The fields were spread over many miles....Our people knew all the fields by their names and turned up exactly where they were required to work" (Holmstrom, 6).

The above lines clearly reflect that the Dalits are deprived of land and properties. They are not given lands by upper castes to cultivate their own crops. Moreover, the Dalits have to stay in particular streets provided to them. The upper castes masters know well that providing land and properties to Dalits would be a blunder. If they would offer them the wealth they would no longer serve them. Wealth could empower them which would be unworthy to the upper castes. The Dalits are neither given enough foods nor properties. Only a minimal amount of sources are being offered to simply survive so they can serve them. As mentioned in the text, their villages are thickly populated in small rows (Holmstrom, 7). Therefore, they have no other way except working in the fields of upper castes. Webster mentions in his well-known text *The Dalit Christians*, "The Pariyar and other dalits, however had no such rights to the land, but did the actual cultivation work for the mirasdars" (Holmstrom, 32).

This kind of dependency on the upper castes pushes them to become 'other' in the eyes of society. If they do not obey as instructed by the upper castes, the Dalits would remain jobless and unwaged. It is usual that no one would like to react to the cost of survival. Hence, the Dalits have to go according to the commands of the upper castes. The question of living becomes more significant than suffering. Any kind of oppression on them becomes acceptable if there is an answer to survival. In such a flow, from generation to generation, Dalits have been suffering from upper castes oppressions. Bama mentions the hardships and sufferings of women in the text,

"Both my grandmothers worked as servants for Naicker families.....My other Paatti was the same. As soon as dawn broke, she would go to the Naicker houses, sweep out the cowshed,

collect up the dung and dirt, and bring home the left-over rice and curry from the previous evening. And for some reason, she would behave as if she had been handed the nectar of the gods"(Holmstrom,16).

Whatever the upper caste gives in exchange for service provided, the Dalits have to accept that with satisfaction. The phrase in the quoted line above 'And for some reason' reflects everything which is the only answer to the question of hunger. The acceptance of the tasted food would eventually evoke a question of their identity. But these foods would curb their hunger which works as nectars in those empty stomachs. These old women are compelled to go to work so early in the morning. If for some reason, they would reach in late at their masters' houses, even the left-over food would not be served. These poor women have no other ways than breaking their bones, days and nights. After working hard for the whole day in the crop fields they reach back home late at night and continue to do the same on the other day.

Bama have given us anxious novel to read and reflect all the Dalit writers want their readers to reflect on their writings. They expressing views about cast discrimination and about all the social issues that be it Marxist ideologies or child labour. Dalit literature is not only considered as a marginalized literature but also the voice of freedom for every denied group regardless of the caste.

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Chapter – 10

AN ECOFEMINIST READING OF KAVERY NAMBISAN'S 'THE SCENT OF PEPPER'

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Abstract

Women's writing is often closely associated with nature as many cultures believe in the proximity between nature and women. Women writers often make nature instrumental to showcase the predicament of women. The combination of nature and women pave the way for ecofeminist interpretation. An ecofeminist perspective identifies the importance of the combination of ecological and gender issues to arrive at possible solutions to redress both. Kavery Nambisan is a renowned writer from South India who often talks about women and nature in her novels. This paper is an attempt to study Kavery Nambisan's novel *The Scent of Pepper* from an ecofeminist viewpoint.

Keywords: Women's Writing, Ecofeminism, Perspective

Ecofeminism finds an inherent link between the oppression of the natural world and the subjugation of women. It explores the relationship between the two to arrive at possible solutions. The term "ecofeminism" was the coinage of Francoise d'Eaubonne, a French writer and civil rights activist, in 1974. She wants people to realize the significance of reconstructing the whole world for a peaceful co-existence of the human and the non-human. Ecofeminist philosophy gained momentum in the 1980s with the efforts of Ynestra King, Mary Mellor, Susan Griffin, Carolyn Merchant, and Karren Warren. Mary Mellor in her introduction to *Feminism and Ecology* defines ecofeminism as:

Ecofeminism is a movement that sees a connection between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression of women. It emerged in the mid-1970s alongside second-wave feminism and the green movement.

Ecofeminism brings together elements of the feminist and green movements, while at the same time offering a challenge to both. It takes from the green movement a concern about the impact of human activities on the non-human world and from feminism the view of humanity as gendered in ways that subordinate, exploit and oppress women. (1)

Ecofeminists subscribe to the following principles

- They believe that societal transformation is the need of the hour
- A reverence and empathy with all life in nature is an essential element of such transformation
- Biocentric viewpoint and interconnectedness are laid emphasis on.
- Humans should not attempt to control the non-human world.
- Power-based relationships and hierarchal structures should be replaced with an ethic based on mutual respect.
- Dualistic conceptual framework which supports the ethic of dominance needs to be shunned.
- As the power-based relations and professes that permeate our societies are reflected in our personal relationships, we must enact our values.
- We must work to rebalance the masculine and feminine in ourselves and society. (Birkeland 20).

Realizing the interconnectivity and interdependence of the web of life on earth is the fundamental premise on which the philosophy of ecofeminism is built. Ecofeminism is predominantly related to gender and environment in the west, but it is more complex in India. Environmental conservation movements in India often go hand in hand with other issues like caste, class, and nativity. Thus, the scope of ecofeminism is wider in India.

The themes of the current environmental crisis, the depletion of natural resources, and the oppression of women are dealt with by the women writers. They make an attempt to break away from inhibiting social constructs toward liberation. They propound a new way of interaction with the environment and brought forth discourse and actions that relate to the Indian context not ignoring the global concerns.

Kavery Nambisan is one such writer who often exhorts the readers to pay attention to the urgency of conservation of nature to make the world a happy and healthy place to live in not only for humans but also for the whole life on the planet. She is a surgeon by profession and is adept at handling both the pen and the scalpel efficiently. She is

equally passionate about surgery and writing. She was born and brought up in the most picturesque location of South India, Coorg. Her closeness to nature made her sensitive to environmental degradation. This paper is an attempt to study Kavery Nambisan's novel *The Scent of Pepper* from an ecofeminist viewpoint.

Women and nature play a key role in the novel *The Scent of Pepper*. The beautiful scenery of Coorg is a constant inspiration to Nambisan. The novel begins in the pre-independence era highlighting the social, political, and environmental transformation that the place undergoes. Nambisan gives us interesting details of the place "Perched along the southern tip of the Western Ghats and blessed with everything that a piece of earth could wish for, Coorg was a little gem to be envied. It is a land famous for its brave warriors, beautiful women, sweet oranges and sweeter honey" (239). The rich variety of flora and fauna of the region is celebrated throughout the novel. The following description is an illustration.

The hill was thickly wooded, dark and secretive, ridged by gigantic roots that clenched great mounds of earth between them. Overhead, the branches formed a screen of wetly-whispering foliage. Frogs the size of postage stamps hopped about, snails reclined on leaf beds, green scorpions hid in the moss, grass snakes flashed in the scrub, and jungle fowl sauntered, their blue plumes trailing. Wild fruit of every colour and flavour asked to be plucked. Purple, orange, opalescent green, blood-red and shiny black; juicy, acrid, honey-sweet, glutinous.

The protagonist of the novel, Nanji, is delineated as the child of nature. The novel opens with the wedding of Nanji. It is her second wedding. Nanji was married at the tender age of twelve to a twenty six year old drunkard who subjected her to severe pain and misery. To the good luck of Nanji, he got trampled by a horse and died. Baliyanna, the zamindar of Kodagu marries her. He is one of the few educated men of Coorg and is a veterinary doctor by profession. Baliyanna is least interested in agriculture. His income as a veterinary doctor is meagre and hence, Nanji takes up the responsibility of feeding the family through her great farming skills. Her perseverance and indomitable spirit make her indispensable to the family of Kaleyandas.

Nature has been Nanji's constant companion. Her nexus with nature begins in her early childhood. In depicting the character of Nanji, Nambisan echoes Wordsworth's view that nature is the best teacher. "Nature had been her classroom" (139) and she wonders "if education had anything with the practicalities of life" (139). The following lines of Wordsworth from *Tintern Abbey* apply in true spirit to Nanji. As Wordsworth claims nature as "The anchor of my purest thoughts, the nurse/ The guide, the guardian of my heart, and soul/ Of all my moral being" (108-110), Nanji also considers nature as her teacher. Nanji seems to have imbibed the qualities of perseverance, independence and endurance from nature.

Nanji's constant friendship with nature helps her in acquiring a good knowledge of medicinal herbs available in Coorg. She applies this knowledge of phytomedicines on several occasions. When Subbu becomes unconscious, she rubs the peppercorn powder into his nose. "Subbu sneezed and began to kick his legs" (38). Traditional knowledge that "analeptic substances like pepper, cardamom with extraordinary health benefits" (Hussain 3953) is applied by Nanji to cure the minor/major ailments of people of her family. She cures the wounds of Baliyanna with herbs. She smears coconut oil on his wounds. When Baliyanna experiences "intolerable pain" she smears "egg white mixed in marigold juice over the burnt areas"

Nambisan drives home the point that traditional women like Nanji display exceptional knowledge of nature and they use this knowledge for the welfare of their families. She also mentions various healthy chutneys that Kodava women prepare with natural herbs. This is more significant in the current context of excessive obsession with junk food. The therapeutic benefits which are the gifts of nature to man are often ignored by modern societies. Vandana Shiva in her *Monocultures of the Mind* laments at "the disappearance of such local knowledge through its interaction with the dominant western knowledge" (9). She finds negligence of local knowledge and universalization of western knowledge to be the reasons for the disappearance of local knowledge.

Nambisan also celebrates the ecofeminist tenet of interconnectivity in this novel. Nanji is against the interference of humans in growing plants in a 'neatly-hedged garden'. She never does it at her home. She respects the natural instinct of independent growth. This concept of diversity and wilderness is often celebrated by ecofeminists which means that nature needs to be in the way it is for the sustenance of life which ensures better ecological balance.

Subbu, the sixth son of Nanji, is a male replica of Nanji. He is born a cripple but the efforts of his mother and his own strong determination make him walk. Through Subbu, Nambisan gives "a profound vision of a man in harmony with his natural world" (Mudaliyar & Chowdhury 106). Subbu is attached to his soil and farming because of the profound influence of his mother. Subbu's wife Mallige is in total variance with his mother. Mallige represents culture whereas Nanji is an embodiment of nature. Nanji's naïve and rustic demeanour is quite opposite of Mallige's refined behaviour. People like the grace of Mallige. She is more after beautification. "Beauty without value is criminal", Nanji fumed. "There's work, work, work, waiting to be done!" (189). When Subbu takes along her to Agra Cantonment, she feels very happy to part with Nanji. Mallige's attraction to culture is deftly portrayed by Nambisan to highlight Subbu's and Nanji's desire for close affinity with nature.

Subbu helps his mother in farming before leaving for the army. Nanji understands Subbu's love for his land. She strongly believes that returning to soil would be his final destination though he momentarily chooses to be in the army. Subbu realizes his love

for his land and returns to it. He becomes the saviour of Kaleyanda estate along with Nanji.

Along with the women-nature connection, Nambisan talks about a few environmental concerns in this novel. The harmless bugs used to be a common phenomenon in every Coorg house. The passage below speaks about their extinction because of pesticides.

Soundless, clean, and black, the size of rice grains, they crawled inside coffee cups, pillowcases, shoes, pockets and chamber pots. They multiplied fast and their numbers increased before your eyes. These completely docile bugs were found in every home in Coorg and stayed on for many decades, their race outlasting generations of people. Years later, the use of strong, synthetic cleansers wiped out this harmless race. (94)

This is line with ecofeminist philosophy.

Ecofeminism glorifies native communities like Kodagus. Nambisan revives the history of the Kodagu society in the novel in the true post-colonial spirit. The Kodagu society is a subsistent society that lives in close connection with nature. Worshipping nature is a part and parcel of their life. They celebrate nature through several festivals like Sankramana, Puthari, and Kalipodh. Sankramana symbolized a “future of plenty”

The region of Coorg is very beautiful during this period. Nambisan describes its beauty as “Jewelled mornings, sharp bursts of rain, and fruity fragrances that replaced the fusty smells of monsoon; moonlit nights when you could read better outside than under a lamp” (79). On Puthari Night, people gather in the paddy fields. “In the light of the full moon, the first sheaves of paddy were cut to the cries of ‘Poli, poli, poli deva .

They come home and tie the sheaves to the doors and bedposts, offer “food and drink to the ancestors and burst crackers in the front yard” (109). The Puthari feast is relished by them and “men quench their thirst with toddy” (109). The next day they revel and sing “on the music of kombu, kottu and dudi” (109). Kolata and Parikali are their favourites. Kailpodh is another important festival of Kodavas where ancestors are worshipped. Like the other festivals of Kodavas, Kailpodh is also celebrated without a Brahmin priest. People pray for their families and for the prosperity of their village. They offer food to deities and guests. Gun sport follows lunch. The youngsters show their shooting skills and the old folk watch the event. Thus, these festivals mark the importance of community living.

Indian philosophy, unlike western ideology, attaches an elevated status to nature which is often considered Prakriti and Sakthi. Nature is feminized and believed to be the life force behind all the forms of life on the earth. Festivals and myths constantly celebrate

this connection and remind man to stay connected with nature. Further, they advocate an organic approach to life thus keeping man away from dominating mentality.

In the later part of the novel, Kodagu gets modernized. Agriculture is modernized. Coffee boards are established. The Kodavas grow rich. Modern facilities enter Kodagu homes. Modernization brings a big change in Kodagu. Nature is replaced with culture. The Kodagu women “bobbed their hair and wore slacks, served tea with cream cakes and sandwiches, and kept beautiful gardens. They sent their children to exclusive boarding schools in Bangalore and Ooty where they would be comfortable eating with a knife and fork and would return with polished accents and a belief that social refinement was equal to achievement” (244). Nanji and Subbu stay aloof from this life. Subbu is against “the systematic sophistication that came with wealth” (244). Through Subbu, Nambisan seems to convey that a man who loves nature can equally love women unconditionally.

Thimmu, the son of Subbaiah, never understands the organic view of life that his father believed in throughout his life. Thimmu returns to Coorg after working in a bank for a brief period. He cuts the trees in Kaleyanda estate and makes money. Subbu, after an initial rejection, gives in as he feels that “the trees would be felled anyway” (262). He listens to the “sound of trees being split into logs- the smell of bleeding wood” (262). Subbu’s grief for the lost trees is meaningless for the materialist Thimmu. Nambisan wonders that “People talked of loving trees but cut them down without regrets, as if the money they got in exchange could replace the loss” (262). Subbu’s guilt haunts him in his dreams. He dreams of each log of wood walking to him and encircling his throat saying “You let us be killed, you let us be killed . . . see how it feels” (263). The branches scratch him and he wakes up weeping. Nambisan’s tragic narration of cutting of the trees is a wake-up call to the readers against uncontrolled human intrusion. It is apt to add here that Coorg witnessed heavy floods in 2018 because of this deforestation.

As Loveleen says, “The Scent of Pepper suggests that despite the hurried pace of civilizational ventures, the virtues imbibed from nature are the mainstay. Humans have to learn to consider the earth as an extension of nature and not just a commodity or a resource. Living in harmony with nature will bestow many benefits on both the earth and the earthlings” (8).

Thus, Nambisan touches upon several ecofeminist themes like nature-women connection, the closeness of ethnic communities to nature, a celebration of nature through festivals and myths, Nanji’s heroic strength, the impact of colonization, extinction of species, and the effects of modernization which give the novel an ecofeminist colour.

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Chapter – 11

FEMINISM IN SHOBADEY'S NOVELS

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Shoba De occupies a place of prominence among Indo – Anglican novelists. The study of Shoba De's fiction aims at the exploration of her versatile personality which exhibits many things of her openhearted news as she stands a super model, celebrity Journalist, magazine editor, columnist, wife, mother, social commentator and TV script writer.

Feminist thought was there long before feminism started as a movement in modern times. Modern organized feminist activity is categorized into their waves. First wave feminism focused on getting voting rights, better working conditions and a right to education for women second wave feminism concerned itself with the issues of equality. Third wave feminism called a space within feminist thought for race related subjective. In India the birth and early growth of the feminist movement was spearheaded by nationalist leaders involved in the country's freedom struggle. Later the movement was taken up by women i.e., modern feminism started by Kamala Das. Recent women writers like Mahasweta Devi, Arundhati Roy, Gita Hariharan Shashi Desh Phande, Anita Desai and Shoba De have variously contributed to the presentation of female experience and establishment of a vibrant female tradition. Shoba De's is a very frank narration while differentiates with all other feminist writers in Indian English Fiction. So De's frank narration and open heartedness is a fascinating study from the Indian point of view.

Shoba De lays emphasis on the image of women with critical comments regarding the new emerging women of modern cosmopolitan India. She presents a variety of women

from the traditional, subjugated and marginalized to the extremely modern and liberated women. Shoba De's novels are a pivotal picture of urban woman's life and the woman's victimization and subjugation by the male community. She draws our attention to woman's exploitation, discrimination and co modification.

Karuna the protagonist of "Socialists Evenings," is the perfect example of the misery of women in India. She suffers due to the irresponsible attitude of her husband. She has no identity before her husband. Similarly, Anjali, a young socialist also suffers because of her incompatible marriage and her husband's oppressive attitude. In "Starry nights" Shoba De gives a mirror image of suppression of human values in the fascinating world of Mumbai cinema through the realistic portrayal of Asha Rani, Geetha Devi, Malini and Rita. In "Sisters" Shoba De brings out the Universal truth that the woman is the enemy of the woman which clearly reminds us the comment given by Shakespeare "when two women placed together we find no cold weather". In "Snapshots" the women turn into useful plaything for men in patriarchal society. All men characters in the novel are treated as tyrants and women characters Aparna, Rashmi, Swati and Noor are all victims of male tyranny. Finally the novel "Second thoughts" is a sad tale of Maya, an oppressed wife. 'Maya' is not allowed to undertake a job in the name of 'tradition'.

Shoba De's portrayal of modern Indian women is not at all a passive in nature. She protests strongly against the forces in male-dominated world, which threaten her very individuality. In 'Sultry Days' she presents a group of modern women turning rebellious when they were ill treated. Nisha's mother protests against her husband's affair with his Sindhi secretary. Sujatha is another woman who does not lead a life which is defined by her husband. She makes her own rules. They break the social norms and moral codes. In fact 'Snapshots' is the Shoba De's women world where more stand on periphery and women fight for power exposes the hollowness and hypocrisy of Indian marriage system. Maya, the central character is so depressed and frustrated by the traditional and dominated attitude of her husband Rayan. But at last her extra – marital relationship with Nikhil breaks the long silence and stupefies the readers.

Shoba De's fictional world is continued to only women characters because male characters are pushed into the margin. So Shoba De's women are new Indian women who totally act according to her individuality. She is now aware of her destination and ready to liberate herself from the clutches of unjust taboos and customs imposed on her by the male dominated society. She not at all depends on her father husband or son for her survival because she is financially independent. So she acts according to her wish and will. She has required strength to face any problem in her life and outside society by her individual thought. She occupies the center and has got rid of her position of the

other. So this 'New women' is assertive, conscious, confident and sometimes aggressive also.

Shoba De's sole aim was to project the idea of liberation in women through self realization. She worked for the complete emancipation of women. Karuna in 'Socialist Evenings' stands a symbol of modern new women, who is independent in every day. She breaks out the bonds of marriage and selects the profession of modeling for her livelihood. De's women of Indian women in several fields like familial, social sexual and business. Asha Rani of 'Starry Nights' is a liberated woman who lives for her own pleasures without any moral codes and value system. In the Indian tradition marriage occupies a very prominent place in the lives of man and women they feel that marriage is a holy union. But De's projection of this aspect is entirely an opposition to Indian tradition. The cohabitation without marriage seems to be the watch world for her. All traditional ideas about marriage are shattered by her modern liberated women because they enjoy a great deal of sexual freedom. In sisters, through Mikki and Alisha, Shoba De shows how this marriage concept and constancy in love has tremendously changed in modern world.

Shoba De projects the vital importance to the miseries of women in the patriarchal society. Her novels move around only the metropolitan women where as rural women do not find place in her novels. They are totally ignored in her view. The village women had an ordinary life but De restricts her characters to the urban area without paying any concentration on the life of ordinary, illiterate and rural Indian women. On the contrary she shows her content and dislike towards the women who had ethical and socially unacceptable like without any moral codes.

As feminist writer Shoba De's novels raise a strong protest against the male – dominated Indian society where women are denied the freedom to act and live according to their own will and wish. She attacks not against the individuals it is against the system that favors men which results woman's subjugation. The need of identity for women is the supreme message in her novels.

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Chapter – 12

VOICING OUT FOR SILENCE: P. SIVAKAMI'S THE GRIP OF CHANGE

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Abstract

The Dalit writers have the eyesight of removing untouchability and establishing equality. They take up the role as they feel that no one else will take it up with such legitimacy. P.Sivakami is one of the earliest Tamil Dalit writers who draws attention to the dual oppression of Dalit women on account of gender and caste at the hands of upper caste men and Dalit men. Voicing out for Silence: P.Sivakami's "The Grip of Change" depict the predicament and sufferings of the Dalits.

Dalit literature is literature written by Dalits about their lives. Dalit literature forms an important and distinct part of Indian literature. Dalit Literature is a purposive revolutionary transformation and protest literature. It is marked by revolt and negativism, since it is closely associated with the hopes for freedom by a group of people who, as untouchables, are victims of social, economic and cultural inequality. The unique and inhumane treatment of the Dalits as untouchables is mirrored in many of the literary works created by the Dalit writers. The Dalit writers have the vision of removing untouchability and establishing equality. They take up the role as they feel that no one else will take it up with such legitimacy.

P.Sivakami is one of the earliest Tamil Dalit writers who draws attention to the dual oppression of Dalit women on account of gender and caste at the hands of upper caste men and Dalit men. She was initially an I.A.S. officer. She gave up her job to become a full time writer. She is self-translator too. The novel *The Grip of Change* written by Sivakami was first published in Tamil as *Pazhaiyana Kazhithalum* in 1989 and later translated to English by the author herself. Sivakami's novels portray the rustic story of women who suffer at the hands of men who strongly believe in and stand for patriarchy. The sufferings of Dalits are a never ending chain for several decades. Power and economical background is the main source for hierarchical structures of caste. People who have power and position are placed at the centre of the society and they become dominant groups while the poor and the powerless are pushed to the marginalized. The Dalits are deprived of all basic needs- food, clothes and shelter. They are not allowed to reside in an area where the higher caste people live. They were marginalized as untouchables, discriminated and denied their basic human rights. In *The Grip of Change*, Kathamuthu, Thangam, Gowri and many other characters experience the caste bias.

Kathamuthu and Naicker in *The Grip of Change* enjoyed the company of each other, still Naicker was quite conscious of his caste. His indirect exhibition of his caste consciousness irritates Kathamuthu. Once, someone brought to the notice of Kathamuthu, the comments of Naicker, "Poor fellow, he belongs to a lower caste. Can't you tell from his gross speech?(18) Grossed at this comment of Naicker, Kathamuthu waits for the right moment to wreak his vengeance on Naicker. Precisely at that moment, one of his relatives who buy a silver arignan for his newborn baby from Naicker's jewellery shop complains to Kathamuthu about his behaviour. Kathamuthu understands from the relative that, "Naicker kept him standing and carefully dropped the silver piece on his palm from a distance in order to avoid touching him... The following day, Kathamuthu showed up at Naicker's store... 'Why don't you sit? What's wrong?' Naicker put his hand on Kathamuthu's shoulder. 'Why are you touching me Naicker? Isn't it a sin if you touch me?' asked Kathamuthu provocatively.

The Dalit labourers are not treated as human beings by the upper caste people. They are forced to obey their upper caste landlord. The oppression has happened not only to the girl child but also to the boy child. A Dalit boy works under Naicker master. When the boy breaks a couple of Kambu stalk to fill his stomach, his master tied him to a pole and violently beat him, and he gets his meal only after six in the evening. His Naicker master thrashed him. But his father sends him again to the Naicker for work. For Dalit people, there is no other way. They have to accept whatever the uppercaste people do. The poverty of the Dalit people is one of the main reasons for their oppressed state.

Dalit women in India have been living in the culture of silence throughout the centuries. They have remained mute expectators to their exploitation, oppression and

barbarity against them. They do not have any control over their own bodies, earnings and lives. The extreme expression of violence, exploitation and oppression against them is visible in forms of hunger, malnutrition, disease, physical and mental torture, rape; illiteracy, ill-health, un-employment, insecurity and inhuman treatment are alienated on the basis of their caste. They are doubly marginalized both as a woman and as a Dalit. In *The Grip of Change*, Sivakami allocates enough space for women-related issues, especially, the issues of sexual abuse. The Dalit women are either browbeaten by the upper caste or by Kathamuthu, a Paraiyan himself. Till Thangam's introduction into Kathamuthu's life, Kathamuthu follows only bigamy. He is married first to Kanagavalli and then Nagamani, a widow. According to the sociological study, the bickering within his family is unavoidable.

After the death of her husband, Thangam was forced to become a prostitute by her brothers-in-law. Even her right over her husband's ancestral land is denied as she is a childless widow. She can get her share of the property only if she can satisfy her lust. Devoid of money, the destitute and dispossessed Thangam moves outside her home to earn her livelihood by working as a labourer in the fields of an upper class landlord Paranjothi Udayar who rapes her. She narrates, "I didn't want it. But Udayar took no notice of me. He raped me when I was working in his sugarcane field. I remained silent; after all, he is my paymaster. He measures my rice..." When the liaison between Udayar and Thangam is disclosed, Udayar's brothers-in-law attack her and beat her doggedly and even she is threatened to be killed. The duality of the upper class is exposed when Udayar abuses her, "Ungrateful whore! Even if she was hurt by the hand adorned with gold! A parachi could have never dreamt of being touched by a man like me! My touch was a boon granted for penance performed in her earlier births".

Thangam, a victim of rape, sexual abuse and physical assault seeks Kathamuthu's aid. Kathamuthu champions the cause of Thangam only for his own welfare. The amount that he gets as compensation from Udayar for allegedly raping Thangam, he spends on himself and his family. Initially, he borrows a part of it from Thangam and then uses the whole lot. In lieu of it, he provides her with food, clothes and shelter. Thus Thangam is often assaulted physically, verbally and sexually not only by the upper caste patriarch but also by her own community men. Sivakami, thus portrays the painful real life of women suffering at the hands of men. The women suffer double marginalization because they suffer as they belong to the lower class and the suffering is augmented because of the patriarchal system.

In *The Grip of Change*, Sivakami documents how Gowri, the daughter of Kathamuthu too was disturbed by an event in which she gets wounded on the remarks of a student belonging to a backward caste. Gowri asked the student who was returning after getting her scholarship money: 'How much did you get?' 'For you, it is different', the girl

replied. 'Aren't you from a Scheduled Caste?' Gowri enquired doubtfully. 'Nonsense! I am a Vanniyakula Kshatriya'. 'If you are not from a Scheduled caste, Just say no ! Why do you have to prefix 'nonsense'?

Many of the Dalits are suffering from deprivation in socio-economic and educational aspects. The monthly income of majority of the Dalits is very low as they are living below poverty line and are working still in unorganized sector or caste based occupations. But, gifted Dalits like Gowri in *The Grip of Change* avidly pursues education and proves their mettle, only to rise higher and higher from the ashes of discomfiture. Gowri is differently distinct from the other Dalit woman of her age. After completing her schooling, Gowri pursued higher education at college. There she faced casteism in its crude form. She was abused by her classmates' casteist remarks. She disliked any mention of her caste. She even felt ashamed of getting "scholarship application form for scheduled caste students from the administrative office of the college" (95). Though humiliated at times, she did not give up her education. Through Gowri, the ideal of education in the recovery of Dalits' condition is also established.

The novel postulates a crude stereotype of the patriarchy along with a hopeful vision presented by Gowri. The glimpses of the growing consciousness can be seen in the novel. This is only by the awareness provided by education that Gowri was able to realize the exploitation of women in a patriarchal set up. She hated the mention of caste and married life. Her dislike for married life attributed to Kathamuthu's (her father) polygamy and gender injustice. Gowri is firm in her conviction that she will not marry and as a ship she is hopeful that the world is gripping change towards an ideal world of equality for all. Gowri finds that society is subverting towards equality when and only everyone is educated.

Dalits have, of late, acquired high political visibility. However, they do not enjoy that visibility in the economy and society. B.R. Ambedkar always emphasized that political democracy will be incomplete without economic and social democracy. Social and economic democracy are the tissues and fiber of a political democracy. The Dalits have to renew themselves to become emancipated. Trust is the only ship that can land them ashore. Only by changing themselves, they can be an instrument of change. It is time that they ceased to survive as Dalits and started living as human beings growing within them the rose of hope. P. Sivakami through her novel, *The Grip of Change* has attempted to champion the cause of her brethren through her creative expressions. She exposes various kinds of oppression on Dalits by the upper caste people. Men, women and children irrespective of their age were subjected to shame. They were externally made to live at the mercy of the upper caste. Sivakami describes how untouchability has been rampant in their village. She gives a clarion call for the upliftment of the Dalits. The novel serves as an ice breaker and voices out the pain and suffering of Dalits

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Chapter – 13

ECOFEMINISM IN THE INDIAN NOVELS

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The term ‘ecology,’ which has been derived from two Greek words oikos and logos; oikos means ‘house’ or ‘place to live in’ and logos means ‘study’ (Haeckel 1866). Therefore, ecology is a study of interrelationship between all living organisms and their environment. Reiter coined the term ‘ecology’ in 1868. The traditional definition of ecology is “the study of reciprocal relationships between organisms and their environment.” Ernest Haeckel (1866), a German biologist, introduced the meaning of ‘ecology’ defined as: “the total relation of the animal to both its organic and its inorganic environment.” Further, Eugene Odum (1953, 1996) expounds it as “the study of the structure and function of ecosystems or structure and function of nature.” The Indian ecologist R. Mishra’s (1967) definition of ecology is “interactions of forms, functions and factors.” The reciprocal relationship between human beings and their environment is gradually disrupted by consumerism, industrialisation and scientific revolution, which lead to environmental crisis. This crisis has given way to many studies, philosophies and theories to solve environmental problems.

Ecofeminism in India

In India, we have an abundant body of writings that deal with the problem of ecology. Writings on nature are the integral part of Indian literature. Along with the literary canon, India has also produced polemical discourse on environmental issues. Here before going to study Indian novel, we will have a cursory glance on the Indian polemical discourse. Sundarlal Bahuguna, a noted Garhwali Environmentalist, has written *Dharti Ki Pukar* (2007). His works mainly focus on the impact of dam construction on forest and water resources and the life of local people. He protested the construction of Tehri Dam. Ashis Nandy, Indian psychologist and social theorist, is also a critic of development, modernity, technology and science. Nandy’s *Science, Hegemony and Violence: A Requiem for Modernity* (1988) – an anthology of essays – articulates the impact of two modern concepts such as science and development on nature and human beings. Nandy argues that these concepts demand sacrifices from ordinary citizens. Whereas P. Sainath’s *Everybody Loves a Good Drought* (1996) concentrates on myriad environmental issues related to land, water, forests, tribes and displacement. Amita Bavishkar’s *In the Belly of the River* (1995) also addresses the impact of development on human beings and environment. Her concern in this work is

to show the impact of the construction of the Sardar Sarover Dam on people of that area – the Bhilala tribal community of Anjavara. In addition to this, C K Janu, a social activist, is a leading light in tribal communities. Her autobiography, *Mother Forest: The Unfinished Story of C.K. Janu* (2004), acknowledges her constant struggle and strive to restore the land of the tribal people and their identity. Moreover, Anitha Agnihotri's *Forest Interludes* (2001) is a kaleidoscopic view of fiction, memoir, personal essays and documentary, which are out of her experiences as IAS officer, of the poorest tribal areas of Orissa and east-central India. It reflects the stark reality Indian tribal people encounter with development and modernisation. If we throw a cursory glance at the above discussion, we will infer that in the Indian environmental crisis, both men and women are equally involved in the movement against modern attitude.

A few Indian ecofeminists have given their account of impact of ecological crisis on women and nature through their works. The seminal Indian ecofeminist is Vandana Shiva, whose major contribution to this field is through her works; *Ecofeminism* (1993), *Monoculture of the Mind: Perspectives on Biodiversity and Biotechnology* (1993), *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India* (2010), *The Violence of the Green Revolution* (1993) and *Biopiracy* (2012). More-over, a few more Indian ecofeminists have formulated their own perspectives on the problem: for example, Bina Agarwal's "Environmental Management, Equity and Ecofeminism: Debating India's Experience" (1998), Chayya Datar's *Ecofeminism Revisited* (2011), Aruna Gnanadasan's "Tradition of Prudence Lost: A Tragic World of Broken Relationship" (2003) and Manisha Rao's *Theory and Practice of Ecofeminism in India: An Analysis* (1996). The insights of these works will be discussed further in the second chapter. In the context of the pressing need for addressing the ecological crisis across the globe, it is also important to understand the insights offered by other nature writings, and in our case, we look to the novel.

Ecofeminism -Indian novel Indian novels have been studied from a variety of perspectives, especially, largely from social (Bhatnagar 2001 ; Mukherjee 2002), political (Kaushik 1988 , 2001 ; Prasad 2001 ; Bhatnagar 2007), historical (Naik 1982 , 1985 ; Iyengar 1962), and cultural perspectives (Ganguli 1977 ; Lannoy 1971). In addition, regional novels have been studied and researched by the critics of their respective languages. However, these novels have hardly been studied from the perspective of eco-criticism and ecofeminism although the ecological crisis forms the backdrop of several Indian novels. Some of the Indian novels address the contemporary environmental crisis, which has occupied a prominent place in the global humanities debate, and also insist us to have an ecological conscience. To mention a few Munshi Premchand's *Godan* (1936), Jim Corbett's *Man-Eater of Kumaon* (1944), Kamala Markandaya's *Nectar in a Sieve* (2009), Ruskin Bond's *The Blue Umbrella* (1974) and

The Cherry Tree (1980), Rohinton Mistry's *Such a Long Journey* (1998), Gita Mehta's *A River Sutra* (1993), and Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (2012). Roy's four volumes of non-fiction writings, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* (2001), *An Ordinary Person's Guide of Empire* (2005), *Listening to Grasshoppers* (2009), and *Broken Republic* (2011); Sohaila Abdulali's *The Madwoman of Jogare* (1999); Anita Nair's *Better Man* (2015); Mahasweta Devi's *The Book of the Hunter* (2002); Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004), *Sea of Poppies* (2008) and *River of Smoke* (2011); Anuradha Roy's *An Atlas of Impossible Longing* (2008); Mamang Dai's *The Legends of Pensam* (2006); TamsulaAo's *These Hills Called Home Stories from a War Zone* (2006) and *Lamburum for My Head Stories* (2009); Usha K.R's *Monkey-Man* (2010); and Ruchir Joshi's *The Last Jet-Engine Laugh* (2012), have all attempted to explicate the web of relationship among human beings, Wildlife and nature. To analyse a few among these, Arundhati Roy's, one of the most well-known Indian writers, *The God of Small Things* (2012) and her five volumes of non-fiction writings, *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* (2001), *An Ordinary Person's Guide of Empire* (2005), *Listening to Grasshoppers* (2009), *Broken Republic* (2011) and *Walking with the Comrades* (2011), project neoliberalistic perspective: the impact of globalisation, nuclear weapon, war, dam construction, etc., on human and nature. The major highlights of her essays are the problems of marginalised people and nature in the name of development and economic growth. Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2004), *Sea of Poppies* (2008) and *River of Smoke* (2011) portray the anthropocentric attitude. *The Hungry Tide* discerns ambiguous and ineffective government policies and a clash between the Government and environmentalists with regard to the announcement of National Parks and Reserved Forests. Mahasweta Devi is a campaigner to tribal communities and radical social-political activist. Her works *Bitter Soil* (1998) and *The Book of the Hunter* (2002) are testimonies to the adverse effect of new settlements in the forest area on the lives of tribal communities. The socio-economic development not only disrupts the lives of the tribal people but also ruptures their socio-cultural norms.

Apart from the novels, the other literary genres exhibit the aspects of environment in their narration. The major nature-loving poets are from the North-east region of India. Mamang Dai's 'River' and 'The Missing Links,' Dayananda Pathak's 'Coral Island,' TamsulaAo's 'The Nightingale of Northeastern India' and so on are some of the examples. Along with these, a few mainstream poets have tried to show natural phenomenon and ecological erosion. For example, Toru Dutt's 'The Lotus' and 'Our Casuarina Tree,' S K Chettur's 'Red Lotus,' Rabindranath Tagore's 'Breezy April,' Sarojini Naidu's 'Summer Woods,' Dilip Chitre's 'The Felling of the Banyan Tree,' Gieve Patel's 'On Killing a Tree' and Keki Daruwalla's 'Boat-Ride Along the Ganga. The Northeastern writers – Mamang Dai, Yeshe DorjiThongchi (Arunachal Pradesh), Birendra Kumar Bhattacharyya, Hem Barua, Indira Goswami, Arup Kumar Dutta, Sanjib Baruah (Assam), Yumlembam Ibomcha (Manipur), Sid-dartha Deb, Anjum Hasan (Meghalaya), Mona Zote (Mizoram), TamsulaAo, Easterine Irulu, Charles Chasie,

AnunglaAier (Nagaland) – deal with core issues of their region that is a confrontation between modernity and traditionality based on their regional ecology, that is, geopolitics. Mamang Dai, a prolific writer of Arunachal Pradesh, narrates a tribal lore in *The Legends of Pensam*(2006). It documents indigenous people lifestyle, whose base rooted into nature. For Arunachal Pradesh people, mountain, river and forest are not only the natural resources but also part and parcel of their lives. Most of their religious practices are related to mountain. The bottom line of these novels is the impact of social and economic development on tribal community, indigenous people and natural resources. The brief catalogue of the literary narration, a canon formulation for the selection of the novels for analysis, demonstrates the discursive formation of environment in Indian literary genre.

Indian Ecofeminist view point: Vandana Shiva, a prominent Indian ecofeminist thinker and activist, has made major contributions to the field of ecofeminism through her works, viz., *Ecofeminism* (1993), *The Violence of the Green Revolution* (1993), *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Survival in India* (2010) and *Biopiracy* (2012). According to Shiva, women and nature have an intricate and intimate relationship as well as a shared history on the grounds of exploitation, degradation and domination by the androcentric attitude. Shiva considers the emergence of a new world order – development, modernisation and advancements in science and technology – as the root cause of the exploitation of women and nature. She claims that women’s subsistence practices, knowledge of nature and dependency on nature for staying alive have been marginalised and replaced with modern science and related practices. Due to this, indigenous people are physically and culturally uprooted from their ancestors’ soil. Moreover, it has caused an onslaught on local cultures resulting in a fragmentation and com-modification of local cultures into saleable entities at global super market in the form of ‘ethnic food,’ ‘ethnic music’ and ‘folklore’ by harnessing ethnic objects for the tourist industry.

Further, Shiva attacks such a development as a Western paradigm that has vicious effects on human beings in general and women and nature in particular. The basic purpose of such a development is economic gain, which is a key driving factor of the Western industrialised economy. The terms ‘development’, ‘progress’ and ‘globalisation’ appear to be synonyms for the Western countries. The Western countries are more focused on productivity and economic growth without giving much attention to what happens to nature. They assume that natural resources are available in abundance for satisfying their greed, which may not be limited by their needs. This attitude leads to destruction of ‘Prakrati’ – an active, powerful and productive force essential for the renewal and sustenance of all life. Due to the exploitation of nature, women are getting deprived of their activity, creativity and sanctity of life. They are

struggling to conserve their subsistence base. In this context, Vandana Shiva gives the example of the first epoch-making movement, the Chipko movement, in which the women of Garhwal district in Himalayas protested against the commercial felling of trees by hugging the trees

The seeds of novel writing germinated in the literary culture of West Bengal. The advent of novel writing, basically in the regional languages and later in English, was led by Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's *Rajmohan's Wife* (1864), and followed by *Durgeshnandini* (1865) and *Kapalkundala* (1866), *Rajalakshami Devi's The Hindu Wife* (1876), *Toru Dutt's Binaca* and so on. As Meenakshi Mukherjee observes, "In most Indian languages – especially in Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, Kannada and Malayalam – the developments occurred in this order, although not simultaneously" (Mukherjee 2016:30). However, by the nineteenth century the novel writing in India was fully evolved. This was made possible by the conditions created by the colonial modernity. To quote Meenakshi Mukherjee again, "By the end of century the novel became the most popular form of print-medium entertainment in at least eight major languages of the country" (Mukherjee 2002:8). The dawn of the nineteenth century witnessed the Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore's novel *Choker Bali* (2005), which portrays the plight of a widow in those days (Iyengar 1985).

The contribution of R. K. Narayan, Raja Rao and Mulk Raj Anand to the making of the novel in India is quite praise worthy. So much has been written on their works and contribution to the Indian English literature that these names have become common among educated Indians. What is unique about the three novelists is that they not only fine-tuned the narrative structure of Indian novels but also participated in the formation of the English language for the novelistic representation of Indian experiences. Narayan's fictional world consists of more than twelve novels and numerous short stories. His major novels are *Swami and Friends* (1935), *Bachelor of Arts* (1936), *The Dark Room* (1938), *The English Teacher* (1945), *Waiting for Mahatma* (1955), *The Guide* (1958), among others. R. K. Narayan's novels focus on two important forms "(a) recovery of self from delusive experience and (b) self-transcendence, often mediated by agent" (Amur 1985:49). Another prolific writer is Mulk Raj Anand. His major focus is on social, political and cultural issues (Raghavacharyulu 1985) with an emphasis on caste, poverty and backwardness (Iyengar 1962). His novels, for example, *Untouchable* (1935), *Coolie* (1936), *Two Leaves and a Bud* (1937), *The Village* (1939) and *Across the Black Waters* (1940), deal with the problems of Indian social system. Next, the major Indian novelist is Raja Rao, who articulated Gandhi's philosophy "reality into a fictive world, and achieving this end within the framework of an aesthetic form" (Shahane 60), through *Kanthapura* (1938). This novel has been a landmark in the history of Indian writing in English purely from the point of view of its experiment with the English language. Unfortunately, such an attempt was neither continued by Rao himself nor the succeeding novelists. His other novels are *The Serpent and the Rope*

(1960), *The Cat and Shakespeare* (1965) and *The Cow of the Barricades* (1947). Further, BhabhaniBhattacharaya's *So Many Hungers* (1947), *Music for Mohini* (1952), *He Who Rides a Tiger* (1954), *A Goddess Named Gold* (1960) and *Shadow from Ladakh* (1966) delineate social, economic and political changes in India through the portrayal of poverty, hunger and exploitation (Iyengar 1985). Further, he also espouses "the freedom struggle, the fight against poverty, superstition, caste-domination, modernization through industrialization, East-West encounter, the struggle to establish a new democratic and socialistic order" (Desai 1985:119).

The Indian English novel's journey marched ahead with the post-colonial and diasporic novelists like Amitav Gosh, Shashi Tharoor, Vikram Seth, Ruskin Bond, Shashi Despande, Kamala Markandaya and Arundhati Roy along with diasporic novelists such as Kiran Desai, Jhumpa Lahiri, Agha Shahid Ali, Rohinton Mistry, Salman Rushdie and so on. The legacy of the Indian novelwriting is carried forth by the corporate world novelists such as Chetan Bhagat, Amish Tripathi and others.

The above-sketched narrative of the Indian novel in general and the Indian-English novel in particular illustrates the rise and development of the novel form in India, its major thematic preoccupations. However, Indian novels have been studied from variety of perspectives.

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Chapter – 14

Ecofeminism in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*

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Abstract

The term 'ecofeminism' is a new term but the spirit that underpins it has long driven women's attempts to protect their livelihoods and make their community a better place. Ecofeminist thinkers portray the concept of gender in their work to analyse the relationship between nature and women. Women and nature are indispensable parts of the works of Alice Walker and she has empathetically written about them. Through her novels, Alice Walker has brought into focus the exploitation of women and the environment. The contribution of Alice Walker's novel *The Color Purple* includes discussions about women's images, the link between women's oppression and male dominance's exploitation of nature. Alice Walker infuses her novel with the concept of feminism and natural freedom from control and violence through an ecofeminist viewpoint. Alice Walker envisions a symbiosis in which men are not oppressed and the environment is not exploited. The present paper is an attempt to explore Ecofeminism in Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*.

Key words: Community, Empathetically, Contribution, Exploitation.

INTRODUCTION

Ecofeminism is a relatively new term that is attributed to Francoise d'Eaubonne who used it in *Le Feminisme ou la Mort* in 1974. Spretnak, a classic ecofeminist, defines the same term as a "joining of environmental, feminist, and women's spiritual concerns" Warren asserts that "what makes ecofeminism distinct is its insistence that non human nature and naturism are feminist issues." Susan Griffin states that "women have some level of communion with nature that men cannot attain". It has been noted that ecofeminism has a different meaning in the perspective of different writers but, ecofeminists share a common awareness of the inevitable connections that exist between women and nature.

In the 1970s, ecofeminism emerged as not just a social but also as a political movement that combined elements of both feminism and ecology. Ecofeminists draw attention to the fact that the patriarchal worldview contributes to nonhuman nature's destruction and exploitation in the male-dominated civilization, as well as to women's suffering. The most important thing in ecofeminism is the phrase "self in relationship to others" which refers to the necessity of acknowledging the integrity of our own inner centre, that includes our own body and consciousness, in order for us to acknowledge and value that of others. Furthermore, we may comprehend that we are in relationships with the natural world and all that it implies in the same way that we can grasp and learn about ourselves and who we are via our relationships with other people (family, friends, loved ones, colleagues, even enemies). Our interactions and relationships with those beings, both living and non-living, as well as their interactions with one another, can teach us something about ourselves. As the two are inextricably intertwined, an ecofeminist conception of nature also functions as a conception of society. In contrast to deep ecology, the two are regarded as distinct but interdependent entities. However, the autonomy of nature is acknowledged.

Women and nature are indispensable parts of the works of Alice Walker and she has empathetically written about them. Walker has highlighted environmental and gender exploitation through her writings. Her 1982 Pulitzer Prize-winning book *The ColorPurple* is an example of this. The current paper explores the major female characters' eco-womanist consciousness. Beyond ecofeminism, the eco-womanism used in the text contends that women and nature should be treated with respect.

Alice Walker in *The Color Purple*, the most well-known of all of her novels, has put forward the aforementioned perspective, and draws attention to the metamorphosis in Celie, - the book's protagonist. Metamorphosis is complete when Celie achieves real oneness with nature and develops aneco-womanist awareness. Walker demonstrates how a womanist and ecological perspective together foretells women's genuine independence and happiness. Although racism and gender issues are prevalent throughout the book, it is the ecological viewpoint that forces the women characters to take back their identities. Purple is the "colour that is always a surprise but is omnipresent in nature," as Walker accurately noted in the introduction to the tenth edition of *The Color Purple*. The novel effectively illustrates the connections that exist between gender, race, and nature, as implied in the aforementioned remark. In order to increase the environmental awareness amongst people and ensure that a more peaceful world is created, this paper aims to read *The ColorPurple* from an ecofeminist perspective and provide a fairly thorough and extensive look at Walker's ecofeminist views and her consciousness towards both women and nature.

Walker illustrates the twin oppression of black women due to racism and sexism that inevitably existed in the patriarchal society she presents in *The Color Purple* to show her heartfelt pity for them. They are denied all of their rights, including their status and identity, and are subjected to physical and emotional abuse. As an illustration, consider Celie, the book's main character. When she is only 14 years old, her stepfather sexually assaults her, and she subsequently gives birth to two children. Celie states in a letter to god, "I am fourteen years old. I am I have always been a good girl. Maybe you can give me a sign letting me know what is happening to me."

Celie is literally traded for financial gain to a widower with four kids after experiencing recurrent physical and sexual abuse at the hands of her stepfather. She is chosen for marriage by the widow due to her diligence, obedience, and attachment to a cow. However, this marriage only places her in a new "cage," not removing even the little oppressions she endures. She is little more than a domestic servant, a field labourer, and a sexual slave to the widower, her so-called husband. As the traditional belief existed amongst the black people that women are merely born to live and remain modest, the black women in the story do firmly think that they are beneath men and must endure all of these abuses. The worst form of disaster that could have happened to them was this type of mental anguish, which allowed men to demonstrate their dominance over women by exerting psychological control over them. Black women are physically and psychologically oppressed, carrying the loads that everyone else refuse to carry, and acting as mules in a patriarchal society. The women become less distinguished and unique.

In this paragraph we can see the awakening nature in the characters. Most of the women in the book have gone from being ignorant to being mature in spirit. They support one another as they seek the truth and ultimately come to see how crucial it is for them to come together. Having experienced ongoing psychological and physical abuse, Celie initially had nowhere to turn but to write letters of confession to God. Celie believes that she has to be secret about her sufferings, "You better not tell nobody but God. It'd kill your mammy." God appears to her as "huge, ancient, towering, gray-bearded, and white." In her imagination God dressed in long robes and walked barefoot, and she told him everything, including her doubts, fears, and even some secrets. She firmly believes that as long as she is capable of writing the word "God," she continues to have a friend, and that God will come to the aid of those who are in need. Celie continues to believe in God's intervention even after Sofia is locked up. Mary Agnes ultimately proves to be the true redeemer. Celie learns that "God is not a white, nor a man" while following Shug's commands. Everybody possesses God, who is everything. Celie eventually discovers that God actually does not exist in the world with the aid of other women. She then starts talking to other ladies to seek support and bravery. Celie is happy and she says: "I am so happy, I got love, I got work, I got money, friends and time."

One of the key factors influencing how males change is the self-awareness of black women. Huge changes occur in Albert's fate as the author describes after Celie begins her journey toward a sea change in her life. Thus, Celie's departure for Memphis marks the beginning of Albert's enlightenment. Albert locks himself inside the home he lives in and refuses to allow anyone in. He actually leads a dirty life that is equated to a 'pig's life'. Unconsciously, Albert makes reflections during Celie's absence. He considers the numerous forms of violence he has used against Celie since their marriage, the importance he places on her as a woman, and how his life would alter as a result of Celie's departure. He comes to the conclusion that women should be treated equally and with respect as they have their own dignity. He feels inspired to accomplish something new as a result of giving up the standard masculinist mindset. All these alterations demonstrate that he underwent an ecofeminist-like rebirth and has since evolved into a natural man. It is a fact that nature's retaliation is the ultimate cause of how men have changed. Men gradually see the value of being kind to both women and the environment. One of the reasons Walker prefers *The Color Purple* from among all her other novels is that there is potential for males to mature and grow.

A form of retaliation to nature that liberates people and restores their imagination, inventiveness and sense of creativity in terms of the natural environment around them which leads to physical and mental liberation. In *The Color Purple*, women achieve true freedom by being financially independent on the basis of their mental liberation. They gain independence in the world this way and stop deferring to males. Celie runs a trouser shop in Memphis after discovering by chance that she is skilled at manufacturing pants. Celie believes that the act of tailoring pants is a difficult task for the patriarchal society in which tailoring pants is seen as a man's domain. She is a natural designer since she has the ability to create attractive, affordable pants that highlight a person's features. She enriches her life and takes a step toward becoming a complete and independent woman by opening a tailoring shop exclusively to stitch pants to cater to the local community. In doing so, she showcases her artistic abilities, genuine feelings, and thoughts. Celie mentions: "By the time I got back home I was feeling so bad I couldn't do nothing but sleep. I tried to work on some new pants." (119)

Mary Agnes is now able to not only assemble songs but also has the courage to perform in front of others, thanks to Shug's guidance. One way or another, singing becomes an essential part of her life and simultaneously offers her courage and confidence. Through her efforts to become a professional singer, Mary Agnes receives praise from others. She is not an invisible entity or a ghost any more but rather a brand-new person, aggressive and working and owning her own business. She won't be worried by her skin colour or history of sexual assault because she has already atoned for her past injuries and shown that she is capable of achieving her goals. This clearly demonstrates

whatever K. Bonetti stated: “that one purpose of art is to aid in your development as a whole person.” It is consistent with Walker's view that art may improve people. Additionally, having their own employment aids Celie and Mary Agnes in achieving financial liberty. Eventually, they get to enjoy the rewards of independence and live up to their own principles. They have been successful in demonstrating that they are the type of women who have identities and are confident enough to not be disregarded.

CONCLUSION

As an ecofeminist, Walker is dedicated to working for the equal rights of all people and is constantly concerned about the victims of racism and patriarchy. She firmly believes that art can redeem humanity. She criticises androcentrism and patriarchalism, for instance, in *The Color Purple*. In contrast to other authors, she also addresses the suffering and adversity experienced by black men. Her greatest contribution to patriarchalism is not her emphasis on the abuse and brutality perpetrated by males against women, but rather her belief that the oppressors may be transformed. She aims to promote the peaceful and harmonious co-habitation of men and women, blacks and whites, and, in a broad sense, of everyone who lives in this world. Celie mentions clearly that “The only way to stop making somebody the serpent is for everybody to accept everybody else as a child of God, or one mother's children, no matter what they look like or how they act” (132). Her choice of a happy ending in this novel has practical significance to the American society where conflicts and differences are almost everywhere. Although her fantasy is beautiful, it is coloured in utopian hues and is yet focused on the future. This indicates that our future generations will still need to put forth significant effort to realise the dream of a peaceful world. In other words, *The Color Purple* gives readers a limitless amount of room to think about reality in addition to a literary and creative shock. As the state of the environment worsens over time, the ecological balance is upset, severe consequences have resulted in an increasing number of extinctions of species, and the survival of humanity is in danger.

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Chapter – 15

FEMINISM, ITS BRIEF HISTORY AND TYPES OF ECOFEMINISM.

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Abstract

This article deals with feminism and reveals brief history and some relevant facts about ecofeminism and also focus on the importance of feminism in the present world. Simultaneously, it stresses on different types of movements happened in the world. It also depicts some famous personalities in the world who contributed in feminist movements and their important writings, plays and T.V. shows which provoked women to achieve their freedom and natural rights. The feminist movements are described in four different waves. This article also depicts ecofeminism and four important types in it.

Keywords: feminism, brief history of feminism, types of ecofeminism

INTRODUCTION

First wave of feminism

Feminism is a range of socio political movements and ideologies that aim to define and establish the social, economic, personal and political equality of the sexes. It incorporates the position that society priorities the male point of view and that women are treated unjustly in these societies. Throughout most of Western and Indian history, women were confined to the domestic sphere, while public life was reserved for men. In medieval Europe, women were denied the right to own property, to study, or to participate in public life. At the end of the 19th century in France, they were still compelled to cover their heads in public, and, in parts of Germany, a husband still had the right to sell his wife. Women were not allowed to conduct business without a male representative, be it father, brother, husband, legal agent, or even son. Married women could not exercise control over their own children without the permission of their husbands and had no access to education and were barred from most professions. In some parts of the world, such restrictions on women continue today. In the 3rd century BCE, Roman Marcus Porcius Cato resisted attempts to repeal laws limiting women's use of expensive goods. Cato cried. "As soon as they begin to be your equals,

they will have become your superiors.” In late 14th- and early 15th-century France, the first feminist philosopher, Christine de Pisan, challenged prevailing attitudes toward women with a bold call for female education. Later, Laura Cereta, a 15th-century Venetian woman published *Epistolae familiares* (1488; “Personal Letters”; Eng. trans. *Collected Letters of a Renaissance Feminist*), a volume of letters dealing with a panoply of women’s complaints, from denial of education and marital oppression to the frivolity of women’s attire. The first feminist pamphleteer in England, writing as Jane Anger, responded with *Jane Anger, Her Protection for Women* (1589). Later, English author, Mary Astell, issued a more reasoned rejoinder in *A Serious Proposal to the Ladies* (1694, 1697). The two-volume work suggested that women inclined neither toward marriage nor a religious vocation should set up secular convents where they might live, study, and teach. The feminist voices of the Renaissance brought the Enlightenment, and women began to demand the new reformist rhetoric about liberty, equality, and natural rights be applied to both sexes. Swiss-born French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, portrayed women as silly and frivolous creatures, born to be subordinate to men. In addition, the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, which defined French citizenship after the revolution of 1789, pointedly failed to address the legal status of women. Olympe de Gouges, a noted playwright, published *Déclaration des droits de la femme et de la citoyenne* (1791; “Declaration of the Rights of Woman and of the [Female] Citizen”), declaring women to be not only man’s equal but his partner. The following year Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), the seminal English-language feminist work, was published in England. Challenging the notion that women exist only to please men, she proposed that women and men be given equal opportunities in education, work, and politics. Women, she wrote, are as naturally rational as men. The Age of Enlightenment turned into an era of political ferment marked by revolutions in France, Germany, and Italy with a rise of abolitionism. By the mid-19th century, issues surrounding feminism had added to the tumult of social change, with ideas being exchanged across Europe and North America. In the first feminist article she dared sign with her own name, Louise Otto, a German, built on the work of Charles Fourier, a French social theorist, quoting his dictum that “by the position which women hold in a land, you can see whether the air of a state is thick with dirty fog or free and clear.” And after Parisian feminists began publishing a daily newspaper entitled *La Voix des femmes* (“The Voice of Women”) in 1848, Luise Dittmar, a German writer, followed suit one year later with her journal, *Soziale Refo*. The first women’s rights convention, held in July 1848 in the town of Seneca Falls, New York. It was a spur-of-the-moment idea that sprang up during a social gathering of Lucretia Mott, using the Declaration of Independence as her guide to proclaim that “all men and women [had been] created equal,” drafted 11 resolutions, including the most radical demand the right to the vote. With Frederick Douglass, supported her and all 11 resolutions passed, and Mott even won approval of a final declaration “for the overthrowing of the monopoly of the pulpit, and for the securing to

woman equal participation with men in the various trades, professions and commerce.” Sojourner Truth’s famous “*Ain’t I a Woman*” speech was delivered in 1851 before the Women’s Rights Convention in Akron, Ohio; she promoted abolitionism and a land-distribution program for other former slaves. After the American Civil War, feminists assumed that women’s suffrage would be included in the Fifteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which prohibited disfranchisement on the basis of race. Susan B. Anthony, a temperance activist, formed the National Woman Suffrage Association in 1869. Emma Goldman, the nation’s leading anarchist, fought for freedom, she said, only “by refusing the right to anyone over her body...by refusing to be a servant to God, the state, society, the husband, the family, etc., by making her life simpler but deeper and richer.” Likewise, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, in *Women and Economics* (1898), insisted that women would not be liberated until they were freed from the “domestic mythology” of home and family that kept them dependent on men. Feminist leaders such as Stanton, Alice Paul also demanded for women’s rights. In 1920 American feminism claimed its first major triumph with the passage of the Nineteenth Amendment to the Constitution. Filling the vacuum, the National Woman’s Party, led by Paul, proposed a new initiative meant to remove discrimination from American laws and move women closer to equality through an Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) that would ban any government-sanctioned discrimination based on sex.

The second wave of feminism

The women’s movement of the 1960s and ’70s, the so-called “second wave” of feminism, in 1961 created the President’s Commission on the Status of Women and appointed Eleanor Roosevelt to lead it. The Equal Pay Act of 1963 offered the first guarantee, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was amended to bar employers from discriminating on the basis of sex. In the late 1960s, then, the notion of a women’s rights movement took root at the same time as the civil rights movement, and women of all ages and circumstances were swept up in debates about gender, discrimination, and the nature of equality. The second-wave feminism provoked extensive theoretical discussion about the origins of women’s oppression, the nature of gender, and the role of the family. Kate Millett’s *Sexual Politics* made the best-seller list in 1970, and in it she broadened the term *politics* to include all “power-structured relationships” and posited that the personal was actually political. Shulamith Firestone, a founder of the New York Radical Feminists, published *The Dialectic of Sex* in the same year, insisting that love disadvantaged women by creating intimate shackles between them and the men they loved men who were also their oppressors. Ultimately, three major streams of thought surfaced. The first was liberal, or mainstream, feminism, which focused its energy on concrete and pragmatic change at an institutional and governmental level. Its goal was to integrate women more thoroughly into the power

structure and to give women equal access to positions men had traditionally dominated. While aiming for strict equality (to be evidenced by such measures as an equal number of women and men in positions of power, or an equal amount of money spent on male and female student athletes), these liberal feminist groups nonetheless supported the modern equivalent of protective legislation such as special workplace benefits for mothers. In contrast the radical feminism aimed to reshape society and restructure its institutions, which they saw as inherently patriarchal. Providing the core theory for modern feminism, radicals argued that women's subservient role in society was too closely woven into the social fabric to be unraveled without a revolutionary revamping of society itself. They strove to supplant hierarchical and traditional power relationships they saw as reflecting a male bias, and they sought to develop nonhierarchical and antiauthoritarian approaches to politics and organization. Finally, cultural or "difference" feminism, rejected the notion that men and women are intrinsically the same and advocated celebrating the qualities they associated with women, such as their greater concern for affective relationships and their nurturing preoccupation with others. The relationship of feminism to African American women always posed greater challenges. White feminists defined gender as the principal source of their exclusion from full participation in American life; Black women were forced to confront the interplay between racism and sexism and to figure out how to make Black men think about gender issues while making white women think about racial issues. Such issues were addressed by Black feminists including Michele Wallace, Mary Ann Weathers, bell hooks, Alice Walker, and Bettina Aptheker. The problems of black women were mentioned in Toni Cade Bambara's *The Black Woman: An Anthology* (1970). Feminism was derailed in countries such as Afghanistan, where the staunchly reactionary and antifeminist Talibans banned even the education of girls. Elsewhere, however, feminism achieved significant gains for women, as seen in the eradication of FGC in many African countries or government efforts to end widow burning in India. More generally, and especially in the West, feminism had influenced every aspect of contemporary life, communication, and debate, from the heightened concern over sexist language to the rise of academic fields such as women's studies and ecofeminism. Sports, divorce laws, sexual mores, organized religion all had been affected, in many parts of the world, by feminism in Pakistan or the deserts of the Middle East.

Third wave of feminism

The third wave rose in the mid-1990s led by Generation Xers who, born in the 1960s and '70s in the developed world. Although they benefited significantly from the legal rights and protections that had been obtained by first- and second-wave feminists, they also critiqued the position of second wave feminism. The third wave was made possible by the greater economic and professional power and status achieved by women of the second wave, the massive expansion in opportunities for the dissemination of ideas

created by the information revolution of the late 20th century, and the coming of age of Generation X scholars and activists.

Feminist and gender-study approaches to Shakespeare criticism made significant gains after 1980. Rebecca Walker, the daughter of the novelist and second-waver Alice Walker. Jennifer Baumgardner and Amy Richards, authors of *Manifesta: Young Women, Feminism, and the Future* (2000), were both born in 1970 and raised by second wavers who had belonged to organized feminist groups, questioned the sexual division of labour in their households, and raised their daughters to be self-aware, empowered, articulate, high-achieving women. They had an awareness of the barriers presented by sexism, racism, and classism. They chose to battle such obstacles by inverting sexist, racist, and classist symbols, fighting patriarchy with irony, answering violence with stories of survival, and combating continued exclusion with grassroots activism and radical democracy. The spirit and intent of the third wave shone through the raw honesty, humour, and horror of Eve Ensler's play and book *The Vagina Monologues*, an exploration of women's feelings about sexuality that included vagina-centred topics as diverse as orgasm, birth, and rape; the righteous anger of punk rock's riot girls movement; and the playfulness, seriousness, and subversion of the Guerrilla Girls, a group of women artists who donned gorilla masks in an effort to expose female stereotypes and fight discrimination against female artists. It gave rise to icons of powerful women that included the singers Madonna, Queen Latifah, and Mary J. Blige, among others, and the women depicted in television series such as *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* (1997–2003), *Sex and the City* (1998–2004), and *Girlfriends* (2000–08). Media programming for children increasingly depicted smart, independent girls and women in lead roles, including Disney heroines such as Mulan (1998) and Helen Parr and her daughter, Violet (*The Incredibles*, 2006), and television characters such as Dora (*Dora the Explorer*, 1999–2006), Carly and Sam (*iCarly*, 2007–12), and *Sesame Street*'s first female lead, Abby Cadabby, who debuted in 2006. The sassy self-expression of "Girl Power" merchandise also proved popular. The increasing ease of publishing on the Internet meant that e-zines (electronic magazines) and blogs became ubiquitous.

Fourth wave of feminism

A fourth wave of feminism began about 2012, with a focus on sexual harassment, body shaming, and rape culture, among other issues. In December 2012 a young woman was brutally gang-raped in India (nirbhaya case) and subsequently died, sparking local protests and international outrage. That was followed two years later by the Gamergate campaign, a manifestation of the so-called "men's rights movement" that had its origins on the Web site 4chan. GamerGate ostensibly sought to promote ethics in video-game journalism, but it was in reality a harassment campaign against "social justice warriors."

The latter were often women who objected to female stereotypes in video games and were subsequently inundated with death threats and rape threats. In 2016, Trump had made a number of inflammatory remarks about women, and the day after the election a grandmother went on Facebook to propose a march on Washington, D.C. The suggestion quickly gained traction and became a call for social change, especially in regard to gender equality. Known as the Women's March, it grew to include demonstrations across the United States and around the world. The protests took place on January 21, 2017, the day after Trump's inauguration, and as many as 4.6 million people attended. Another was the Me Too movement, which was launched in 2006 in the United States to assist survivors of sexual violence, especially females of colour. The campaign gained widespread attention beginning in 2017, after it was revealed that film mogul Harvey Weinstein had for years sexually harassed and assaulted women in the industry with impunity. Victims of sexual harassment or assault around the world and of all ethnicities began sharing their experiences on social media, using the hashtag #MeToo. The movement grew over the coming months to bring condemnation to dozens of powerful men in politics, business, entertainment, and the news media.

ECOFEMINISM AND ITS TYPES

Ecofeminism is a branch of feminism and political ecology. Ecofeminist thinkers draw on the concept of gender to analyse the relationships between humans and the natural world. The term was coined by the French writer Françoise d'Eaubonne in her book *Le Féminisme ou la Mort* (1974). Ecofeminist theory asserts a feminist perspective of Green politics that calls for an egalitarian, collaborative society in which there is no one dominant group. Today, there are several branches of **ecofeminism**, with varying approaches and analyses, including liberal ecofeminism, spiritual/cultural ecofeminism, and social/socialist ecofeminism (or materialist ecofeminism). Interpretations of ecofeminism and how it might be applied to social thought include ecofeminist art, social justice and political philosophy, religion, contemporary feminism, and poetry. Ecofeminist analysis explores the connections between women and nature in culture, economy, religion, politics, literature and iconography, and addresses the parallels between the oppression of nature and the oppression of women.

Modern Science and Ecofeminism

In *Ecofeminism* (1993) authors Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies ponder modern science and its acceptance as a universal and value-free system. The privilege of determining what is considered scientific knowledge and its usage has been controlled by men, and for the most part of history restricted to men. Many examples exist, including the medicalization of childbirth and the industrialization of plant reproduction. A common claim within ecofeminist literature is that patriarchal structures justify their dominance through binary opposition, these include but are not limited to: heaven/earth, mind/body, male/female, human/animal, spirit/matter, culture/nature and white/non-white. Oppression, according to them, is reinforced by assuming truth in these binaries,

which factuality they challenge, and instilling them as 'marvelous to behold' through what they consider to be religious and scientific constructs.

Vegetarian ecofeminism

The application of ecofeminism to animal rights has established vegetarian ecofeminism, which asserts that "omitting the oppression of animals from feminist and ecofeminist analyses is inconsistent with the activist and philosophical foundations of both feminism (as a "movement to end all forms of oppression") and ecofeminism." It puts into practice "the personal is political", as many ecofeminists believe that "meat-eating is a form of patriarchal domination that suggests a link between male violence and a meat-based diet." During a 1995 interview with *On the Issues*, Carol J. Adams stated, "Manhood is constructed in our culture in part by access to meat-eating and control of other bodies, whether it's women or animals". According to Adams, "We cannot work for justice and challenge the oppression of nature without understanding that the most frequent way we interact with nature is by eating animals". Vegetarian ecofeminism combines sympathy with the analysis of culture and politics to refine a system of ethics and action.

Materialist Ecofeminism

The key activist-scholars in materialist ecofeminism are Maria Mies and Veronika Bennholdt-Thomsen in Germany; Vandana Shiva in India; Ariel Salleh in Australia; Mary Mellor in the UK; and Ana Isla in Peru. Materialist ecofeminism is not widely known in North America aside from the journal collective at *Capitalism Nature Socialism*. A materialist view connects institutions such as labor, power, and property as the source of domination over women and nature. There are connections made between these subjects because of the values of production and reproduction. This dimension of ecofeminism may also be referred to as "social feminism", "socialist ecofeminism", or "Marxist ecofeminism". According to Carolyn Merchant, "Social ecofeminism advocates the liberation of women through overturning economic and social hierarchies that turn all aspects of life into a market society that today even invades the womb". Ecofeminism in this sense seeks to eliminate social hierarchies which favor the production of commodities (dominated by men) over biological and social reproduction.

Spiritual Ecofeminism/Cultural Ecofeminism

It is another branch of ecofeminism, and it is popular among ecofeminist authors such as Starhawk, Riane Eisler, and Carol J. Adams. Starhawk calls this an earth-based spirituality, which recognizes that the Earth is alive, and that we are an interconnected community. Spiritual ecofeminism is not linked to one specific religion, but is centered around values of caring, compassion, and non-violence. Often, ecofeminists refer to

more ancient traditions, such as the worship of Gaia, the Goddess of nature and spirituality (also known as Mother Earth). Wicca and Paganism are particularly influential to spiritual ecofeminism. Most Wicca covens demonstrate a deep respect for nature, a feminine outlook, and an aim to establish strong community values. In her book *Radical Ecology*, Carolyn Merchant refers to spiritual ecofeminism as "cultural ecofeminism". According to Merchant, cultural ecofeminism "celebrates the relationship between women and nature through the revival of ancient rituals centered on goddess worship, the moon, animals, and the female reproductive system." In this sense, cultural ecofeminists tend to value intuition, an ethic of caring, and human-nature interrelationships.

CONCLUSION

In the end, since ecofeminism is a branch of feminism, it can be seen in the historical movements of feminism. Feminism came in the world in four different waves and created a sense of awareness amongst women to fight for equal rights, equal laws and freedom. In some countries, women are still struggling for their basic laws and rights. However, each wave of feminism is related to ecofeminism. Both are interconnected to each other.

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Chapter – 16

ECO CRITICAL REFLECTIONS ON THOREAU'S WALDEN

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Abstract

Walden is the evocative writing of Henry David Thoreau, the most influential transcendentalist writer in the United States in the 19th century. Thoreau's Walden is a masterpiece on environmental literature. It enhances the relation between man and the natural world. Thoreau repudiates temporal and supplicates nature as the repository of neutrality. Thoreau accentuates human beings as a cardinal part of nature. Hudson regards Walden as "The Golden book in any century".

KEY WORDS: Henry David Thoreau, Walden, Nature, Eco criticism.

INTRODUCTION

Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) is an American transcendentalist, poet, philosopher and the pioneer of modern environmentalism. His name is apposite with nature because he has stanch his whole life into spotting and scrutinizing about nature. He did not get much attention during his lifetime, but today he is applauded as the most influential voice of the natural environment. Thoreau was admired as an "environmental saint", "a son of nature" and "a saint who protects the nature and human nature". Thoreau's philosophy of civil disobedience influenced the political thoughts and actions of notable figures as Leo Tolstoy, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr.

"Walden" or "Life in the Woods" is a monumental work of Thoreau. It was published in 1854. Thoreau desired to shun the material world and reside in the lap of nature and so he chose Walden Pond owned by his friend Emerson. He stayed for two years and two months at Walden Pond, from July 1845 to September 1847. Thoreau documented his aloofness at Walden Pond which is quite beautiful just like a paradise, near Concord, Massachusetts. Thoreau celebrates scrutiny, feeling, thinking and jotted down his observations, assayed and studied the information and emprises brought to humans by

wilderness. Thoreau anticipates that man should be a seer and listener and always vigilant to nature.

Walden is an account of his life at the pond before restoring to the sodality. The book is mounted in eighteen chapters glorifying solitude, simplicity, and living close to nature. He commenced and ceased his journey in spring. He wanted to have a life of “voluntary poverty” for himself with basic needs of food, shelter, clothing and fuel. He criticizes society for emptiness in spirituality and people obsession with the materialistic world. He constructs his own small cabin, earns money for his requisites by working in the bean field. After being transfigured by his experience in Walden, Thoreau terminates that with spiritual awareness through nature, new life of an individual can emanate. This paper strives to have a glimpse on Thoreau’s Walden from Ecocritical stance.

The appropriate theory that would justify the symbolic meaning of nature in Walden is ecocriticism. Ecocriticism is a transdisciplinary notion that implies “the study of literature and environment”. Ecocriticism deals with self, society and the world encapsulating the essentials, environmental predicaments.

Ecocriticism was coined by William Rueckert in his article “an ecological poetics” articulated in his essay “Literature and Ecology: An experiment in Ecocriticism” in 1978 but gained momentum in 1990’s. Ecocriticism was first defined by Cheryl Glotfelty as “the study of relationship between literature and the physical environment”. Ecocriticism is better known as “green criticism”.

Ecocriticism also called as ecological feminism which combines ecology and feminism. Feminists have given the concept of gender to scrutinize correlation between human and nature. Hence it can be contemplated as a branch of ecocriticism. Ecocriticism claims to dig into ourselves and the world around us, criticizing the manner that we characterize, interact with and construct the environment, both “natural” and “manmade”.

Notable evolutions spread out remarkably in nineteenth century literature where William Wordsworth, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, William Cullen Bryant, James Kirke Paulding, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Walt Whitman portrayed nature to their finest. There are many authors who contributed to this field and Henry David Thoreau is one such author who has demonstrated his concern for nature as a physical environment in his text “Walden”.

WALDEN-RESTORATION WITH NATURE

Thoreau’s encomium of nature’s creativity is depicted in Walden. He describes Walden as **“The mirror which no stone can crack, whose quicksilver will never wear off, whose gilding nature continually repairs; no storms, no dust, can dim its surface ever fresh – a mirror in which all impurity presented to it sinks”**. The facet of

Walden is as placid as a mirror, like a crystal embedded in the earth, perspicuous, faultless. It makes the impact on the readers that nature keeps its rejuvenation by mending traces from human beings. Walden pond is radiant, transparent and substantive. When spring comes, the ice on the lake tacitly liquifies. On the shore of Walden Lake numerous kinds of grasses like a green ribbon emerge from the soil, budding forth the new life. Numerous birds sing and fly here and there in the woods. Plants begin to sprout, raise, bloom and bear fruits, and the breeze stirring them and preserving the constant balance of nature. It is nature that keeps human beings in good shape, zestful and reposeful. The vegetables and green plants provided by our mother earth are the best natural nourishment for us human beings. Fresh air is a magic bullet that keep human beings athletic. It is nature that keeps human beings young and full of vigour and vitality.

Thoreau's aspiration was to decamp the pseudo life of American society and to live in the heart of the nature. Thoreau rejects what is profane and superficial. Thoreau didn't escape from the modern society, he moved to the woods because he had hesitations about real life. He wanted to show that we shouldn't pay too much attention to the material and lose our meaning and direction of life.

Thoreau states the purpose of staying in woods in "**Economy**" as **"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived"** taking nature as his model. He wanted to lessen his needs of living to minimum. He substantiates, how one places oneself in the natural world is the finest way to understand the nature. Thoreau voices **"Still we live meanly, like ants...our life is frittered away by detail"** means that people anguish too much about trivial things, if we live simple life we will have less stress.

Thoreau describes the reason for choosing the perfect place to conduct experiment on living in **"Where I Lived and What I Lived For"**. Thoreau moves to the cabin on Independence Day. He affirms that his independence is not only from people but also from responsibilities which a society demands. Thoreau's choice of being close to nature is the best part of choosing where to live. His first impression of the pond, which is sometimes covered with fog in the early morning and sometimes clear when there is a gentle rain, is like a "lower heaven," with the skyline and mountain spreading out behind it.

Thoreau states **"Time is but the stream I go a- fishing in"**. He compares Time to flowing water which is unidirectional but eternity remains. He uses metaphor of time as flow or movement. In order to see time as a flow or movement, there must be a

substratum like the riverbed which can be called as eternity. Time is a sort of river of passing events, and strong is its current. The endless flow of the "river of time" is not a new metaphor, but fishing in it is. Because the heart of fishing is not catching. We don't go trout catching. The heart of fishing is waiting and watching, for a bite from whatever comes along or, perhaps, an act of love, or forgiveness. Thoreau waits and watches amid the quiet stream of time of consciousness, of patience, of attentiveness.

Morning is Thoreau's invitation to make his life simple and commune with nature. Every morning he bathes in the pond calling it a "religious exercise." He calls morning the time that all important events, including poetry and art, occur. It is the time that "intelligences wake," as say the Vedas. Nature is his spiritual guide, leading him in its simple natural rhythms toward his own spiritual path and his proper work. Thoreau illustrates prototypical sounds in "**Sounds**". He listens to the bells of the nearby towns, the lowing of cows that he experiences as great music, the clucking of birds, the melancholy hoots of owls which sound like men moaning in grief, the rolling of wagons, the bark of dogs. He celebrates that there are no domesticated sounds, not even a tea kettle, and "no path to the civilized world." Thoreau's close observation of nature testifies to his profound relationship with it, Thoreau's catalogue of sounds is evidence to his alertness to his surroundings and the pleasure he takes in the variety and simplicity of nature.

Thoreau's experience at Walden corroborates his love with nature and his faith is that kinship with nature is crucial for every individual. Thoreau says, "**I find it wholesome to be alone the greater part of the time. To be in company, even with the best, is soon wearisome and dissipating. I love to be alone. I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude**". Thoreau strongly believes if a man is part of the Mother Nature he is never alone. Society creates loneliness and fear, which can be dispelled by being close to nature. Solitude gives the chance to become close to the nature.

Thoreau's bean-field represents his connection to the nature and his faith in the power of work to enrich him spiritually. "**I cherish them, I hoe them, early and late I have an eye to them; and this is my day's work. It is a fine broad leaf to look on**". Raising beans enabled him to establish a way of life in a state between wild, untamed nature and well-ordered civilization; in this way, he was able to derive what was of value to him from both worlds. From the world of man, he derived his occupation: cultivating the soil. He assumes it as an opportunity to experience prolonged close contact with nature.

The pond is mysterious, pure and wild which witness wilderness's creativity. For Thoreau the pond is a key source to examine the nature in a broader perspective. Pond represents a state of unchanging perfection. Colour of the pond is Thoreau's personal frontier between the natural and the divine. "**Walden is blue at one time and green at another, even from same point of view lying between earth and the heavens, it**

partakes the colour of both.” The gorgeous colour from the pond which astounds him a great deal remains him in ecstasy. Walden is thus green like earth and blue like sky. He not only conveys his admiration for the changes but also feel awed for it.

Thoreau shows that life can be complete without being too complicated to have nature as his home. This is basically by narrowing down too many objectives that meet the daily lives of the man. As such, all this simple life is easily offered by nature there are no expenses incurred in taking a bath in the path, having a simple structure near the nature. Therefore, to Thoreau, life is all about making it simple, simplifying it into the nature that provides both spiritual and natural satisfaction. Through his life in solitude, he discovered the remedy to spiritual disintegration in the form of the economy through simplicity in which the affairs are reduced into two or one thus making life better and cheaper. Besides that, at the pond, he also learns the art of self-reliance that his teacher.

The illusion of progress that mankind has developed is one of the key factors that Thoreau fights in his quest to understand nature and lead a simple life. The world has been taken over by the economic demands which end up causing the destruction of nature, the technology which calls for sophisticated weaponry, tools, and equipment that have all endangered nature and overall territorial advances on natural values thus creating an imbalance between humanity and nature. However, this outward development and improvement do not appeal to Thoreau as far as man seeks peace in his inner self. He believes that inner peace is found in nature, in a peaceful environment where there are limited disturbances from human activities. As such, Thoreau does not support the encroachment activities of mankind into nature. In order to protect the environment and nature at large, Thoreau seems to be resistance to development. His protective nature of the environment shows that indeed there is still value for the environment that mankind should rather prioritize their development agenda as the destruction of environment and nature comes at a cost for the entire human population.

Besides that, Thoreau also shows that nature has the authority of mankind, a man tries to take charge if nature its nature that triumphs at long last. Nature exists peacefully with mankind, however, its mankind that tries to show his superiority through his nature of exploration. Therefore, the war between man and nature is in vain. This is because man has no chance to win in such a war. This is simply because of the ability of nature to replenish itself such that there it does not get exhausted but it can always be renewed. This is unlike the case of mankind which upon their death there is no renewal. As such, nature remains superior to mankind and it should thus be always protected and taken care of.

Thoreau successfully uses his mastery of literature to portray how man has to take care of nature. The advancements taking shape in the universe today means that nature has

no chances. Something has to be done in order to ensure that in the end both mankind and nature can co-exist peacefully. However, for to take place just like Thoreau puts it man has a role to find his inner self. Man must be able to assess the situation and not exploit nature without proper means to ensure that it's replenished. Thoreau depicts nature as a tool that bears all remedies to the problems that mankind faces today. In his theory man has to be simple and the economic aspect will be taken care by nature. As such, ecocriticism theory shows the emphasis that man must pay on the protection of nature by the use of literature.

CONCLUSION

Henry David Thoreau, a pioneer of American Literature contributed immensely to ecocriticism. Thoreau's *Walden* inspired people's ecological consciousness, awakened people's complex of nature and ecological friendship, and advocated people to choose the ecological way of survival. At the same time, it makes the people realize that nature can meet the needs of human life, but cannot meet the unlimited greed of mankind. Human beings are just one of the many members of the natural biosphere. Thoreau's ultimate message is “**to find the meaning of life**” by creating better, natural, spiritual homeland.

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Chapter – 17

ECOLOGICAL ELEMENTS IN AMITAV GHOSH'S THE HUNGRY TIDE

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Abstract

Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* (2005) explores human vulnerability before the power of nature especially that of the marginalized under classes, raising essential questions about the tensions between traditional land use and government plans, about identity and social justice. The novel is set in the Sundarban mangrove forest, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and home to dazzling panoply of animal life. This immense area occupies approximately ten thousand square kilometers across the Indo-Gangetic Delta, transgressing the boundaries between India and Bangladesh. Here tigers kill dozens of people per year, and violent cyclones often leave hundreds of thousands dead in their wake, as occurred in 1970, 1991, and 2004. In mapping out the conflict between the rights of local people and the Bengal tiger, a protected species under the Project Tiger conservation project begun in 1973 which established a substantial part of the Sundarbans as a refuge, Ghosh's novel seeks a postcolonial ethics and aesthetics that transcends the ideologies of the past, even as it cautiously evaluates the extent to which such a utopian ideal is possible.

Key words: Environmentalism,, Eco-criticism, Nature, Tigers, Dolphins, Cyclones

The story is set in the largest mangrove forest of the world: the Sundarbans. Situated in the delta of the Ganga and the Brahmaputra at the mouth of the Bay of Bengal in India and Bangladesh, it is 'an archipelago that hosts the largest estuarine mangrove forest in the world, a unique ecosystem of tidal waterways and islands that is home to a wide variety of plant and animal species, including a large population of tigers' (Prabhu 2).

The area seems to be particularly well chosen to approach climate change. Kanksha Mahadevia and Mayank Vikas provide an explanation for this matter in their scientific article ‘Climate Change- Impact on the Sundarbans: A Case Study.

“With rising sea levels, islands are disappearing and the increasing salinity in the water and soil has severely threatened the health of mangrove forests and the quality of soil and crops. Additionally, there have been serious disturbances to hydrological parameters and change in fishing patterns, resulting in disastrous consequences for fishermen. Frequent cyclones and erratic monsoon raining patterns are damaging ecology and humanity”.
(Mahadevia 7)

Considering the fact that rising sea levels are a direct consequence of climate change and that the tropical forest of the Sundarbans is situated in a delta area, it takes little time to understand the seriousness of the issue. The mangroves function as an ‘irreplaceable barrier against the destructive force of the cyclones that regularly batter this coast’ (Weik 120). Beyond the lush greenery that is home to the man-eating Royal Bengal Tiger, the forest needs to be protected mainly because it serves as a protection against extreme weather events. After being listed in the UNESCO World Heritage in 19972, the Sundarbans were recognised as ‘Wetland of International Importance’ under the Ramsar Convention on 30 January 2020.³ As pointed out in the article from The Hindu, ‘Protecting the Sundarban Wetlands’, the main reasons for protecting the area are that it serves as a shock absorber for natural disasters such as cyclones or tidal waves but it is also a critical place in terms of biodiversity.

The rich biodiversity is indeed mentioned in the novel as Piya, the cetologist, notices that ‘there [are] more species of fish in the Sundarbans than could be found in the whole continent of Europe. This proliferation of aquatic life was thought to be the result of the unusually varied composition of the water itself’ (Ghosh 2004, 124). The ecological value of the place is thus priceless and unique. In *The Hungry Tide*, Ghosh portrays the Sundarbans as a unique, strange and ever-changing eco-system. The singularity of the region is illustrated by what Piya thinks when she is on a boat:

“Staring at it now, she was struck by the way the greenery worked to confound the eye. [...] There was such a profusion of shapes, forms, hues and textures, those even things that were in plain view seemed to disappear, vanishing into the tangle of lines like the hidden objects in children’s puzzles”. (Ghosh 2004, 150)

It is striking in this excerpt that the uniqueness of the landscape lies in its misleading character. Piya has trouble distinguishing parts of the landscape, which rather presents itself as a dense mass. The imperceptibility of the forest is certainly due to the ‘perpetually mutating topography’ (Anand, 25) inherent in the Sundarbans. Indeed, it is a well-known fact that ‘mangrove forests of the Sundarbans appear and disappear, merge and submerge, surprise and disrupt human lifestyles’ (Vincent 2). The landscape just keeps changing from one day to the other, depending on the tides: ‘[t]he currents are so powerful as to reshape the islands almost daily’ (Ghosh 2004, 7). As the tides ebb and flow, some islands are swallowed and the landscape drastically changes its appearance within just a few hours. Ghosh tried to convey this sense of mutability in his novel through Kanai as he says that ‘the boundaries between land and water are always mutating, always unpredictable’ (Ghosh 2004, 7) and also through Nirmal:

“But here, in the tide country, transformation is the rule of life: rivers stray from week to week, and islands are made and unmade in days”.
(Ghosh 2004, p.224)

In an interview with Vescovi, Ghosh admitted that ‘[i]f [he were] to write ten books like *The Hungry Tide*, it would never do justice to the absolute magic of being there at night with the tide changing, under the moon, and to hear the tiger nearby’ (Vescovi 140). The landscape is somehow elusive. Still, this unpredictability does not make it easy for the locals who live in the Sundarbans, or actually for any human being trying to settle there. In *The Hungry Tide*, the main island where the story unfolds is called Lusibari and in fact, ‘[t]here were no docks or jetties on Lusibari, for the currents and tides that flowed around it were too powerful to permit the construction of permanent structures’ (Ghosh 2004, 37). It is made clear that human constructions hardly resist these surroundings and that human life is equally challenging for ‘in Lusibari hunger and catastrophe were a way of life’. (Ghosh 2004, 79)

Hunger is actually a recurrent motif in the novel; the title already initiates the hunger motif: ‘*The Hungry Tide*’. This refers to the water ‘constantly swallowing and regurgitating land’ (Anand 35): ‘the rising waters of the *mohona* would swallow up the jungle as well as the rivers and their openings’ (Ghosh 2004, 36). The theme of hunger is also an obvious reference to the hungry tigers, seeking a prey. Thus, hunger ‘connect[s] the immanence of the tide and the tiger’ (Anand 34). It is also hunger that ‘drove [the settlers] to hunting and fishing and the results were often disastrous. Many died of drowning, and many more were picked off by crocodiles and estuarine sharks’ (Ghosh 2004, 79). Hunger is an aspect of life in the Sundarbans and is manifested by both the humans and the nonhumans. Still, we should keep in mind that the Sundarbans

are home to more than 4.5 million people who struggle and battle their circumstances every day. On the fictitious island of Lusibari, life is manageable thanks to ‘its bādh, the tall embankment that encircled its perimeter, holding back the twice-daily flood’

(Ghosh 2004, 59). The embankment enables human beings to live on the island, protecting the inhabitants, who would otherwise be at the mercy of the topography. In this respect, it can be claimed that life in the so-called ‘tide country’ (Ghosh 2004, 8) presents a certain fragility. The Sundarbans is also fragile inasmuch as it needs to be protected from human destruction. Despite its apparent fragility, the mangrove forest is nevertheless threatening and resistant to the dominion of human beings. The ambivalence of the place is put into words by Anand when she writes that what characterises ‘the uniqueness of the Sundarbans, [is] the waterscape that alternates between being subject and object, victim and victimizer’ (Anand 24). While the forest is a victim of climate change and deforestation, it also has the power to strike back and is sometimes treacherous. The harshness of the waterscape is experienced several times in the novel. A few examples are first when Piya falls off the guard boat into the water, only to find that ‘[r]ivers like the Ganga and the Brahmaputra shroud this window with a curtain of silt: in their occluded waters light loses its directionality within a few centimetres of the surface. [...] With no lighted portal to point the way, top and bottom and up and down become very quickly confused’ (Ghosh 2004, 54). Although she is an experienced swimmer, the opacity of the waters in the Sundarbans confuses her to the point that she would have drowned if Fokir had not saved her.

Kanai and Piya become aware of their own ‘global’ attitude when they are confronted to their limits, with the tiger killing for Piya and with the tiger encounter on Garjontola in Kanai’s case. Still, *The Hungry Tide* is not limited to conflicts between human beings, or even within human beings in the case of Piya or Kanai, for example. Ghosh goes further than that. In the first place, he puts forward a conflict between the human and the nonhuman, as exemplified by the Morichjhapi Massacre. The latter takes an important place in the novel and shows the way climate, migration, postcolonialism and protection of the environment are intertwined. As Jones explains, the origin of this historical event is to be found in 1947, after the Partition of India, when Bangladeshi refugees were placed in camps in Dandakaranya, in central India. The climate there was drastically different from what it was in their homeland: indeed, the climate was semi-arid and dry whereas they were familiar with water-soaked landscapes. As soon as the refugees had the opportunity to leave, they did and they chose to settle in West Bengal in the late 1970s, which was well-known to them as it resembled their original territory. Aside from this, Indira Gandhi launched a project to protect the Bengal Tiger, which had become an endangered species. This project is referred to as the Project Tiger and it states that no human beings are allowed on the wildlife reserves distributed across India. Unfortunately for the refugees, they decided to settle on an island which was part of one of those natural reserves. The government began to take action on January 26,

1979: in addition to getting deprived of food supplies and fresh water, ‘the community was tear-gassed, huts were razed, and fisheries and tube wells were destroyed, in an attempt to deprive refugees of food and water’ (Mallick 108). The government even denied their deeds but continued the blockade. On May 14, 1979, they hired off-duty policemen and gangs to kill and force the resisting refugees out with shocking violence: bodies were dumped in the Ganges and the death toll is unclear. After the massacre, ‘the Left Front insisted that the eviction had been an ecological necessity, a step taken to prevent these and future refugee-settlers from destroying a precious ecological space’ (Weik 133). In *The Hungry Tide*, the reader perceives the massacre through Nirmal’s eyes thanks to his journal. Nirmal, animated by a utopian and Marxist ideal, desires to help the refugees and is most impressed by the way they organize life on the island: ‘[b]ut what I saw was quite different from the picture in my mind’s eye. Paths had been laid; the bādh - that guarantor of island life - had been augmented; little plots of island had been enclosed with fences; fishing nets had been hung up to dry’. (Ghosh 2004, 171) Nirmal, this middle-class bookish schoolteacher, had not expected to see such a civilization emerging among refugees. He provides the reader with more information about life on the island before the disaster strikes. He is fascinated by the refugees and wants to help them but his wife Nilima categorically refuses, saying that those people are squatters; that land doesn’t belong to them; it’s government property. How can they just seize it? If they’re allowed to remain, people will think every island in the tide country can be seized. What will become of the forest, the environment?’ (Ghosh 2004, 213) What Nilima says presents a concern for the environment and raises ethical questions at the same time. At what cost should the environment be protected?

Furthermore, it is the landscape that binds all the layers of narrative present in the novel: Bon Bibi is essential to the culture of the Sundarbans, the Morichjhapi massacre that is told in Nirmal’s journal happened there, and the main plot unfolds in the Sundarbans, too. Bon Bibi’s legend is syncretic inasmuch as ‘Bon Bibi herself is a deity of Middle-Eastern Islamic origins, but over time her worshippers have come to embrace Hindu ritual practices as well. Thus, for instance, Piya is surprised to find Fokir, a Hindu, singing out an Arabic prayer at the shrine of Bon Bibi. The local population’s devout belief in Bon Bibi is a case of the cultural syncretism reflecting the ecological syncretism of the Sundarbans itself’. The legend thus reinforces the cultural and ecological syncretism that exists in the Sundarbans. Certainly, the notion of syncretism, which refers to a blending of different religions and cultural paradigms, is related to the ideas of interconnectedness and cosmopolitanism pervasive to the novel. Nirmal reinforces this idea in his description of the landscape

“The mud banks of the tide country are shaped not only by rivers of silt,
but also by rivers of language: Bengali, English, Arabic, Hindi,

Arakanese and who knows what else? Flowing into one another they create a proliferation of small worlds that hang suspended in the flow. And so it dawned on me: the tide country's faith is something like one of its great mohonas, a meeting not just of many rivers, but a round-about people can use to pass in many directions- from country to country and even between faiths and religions". (Ghosh 2004, p.247)

Nirmal highlights the way languages are intrinsic to the mixed identity of the Sundarbans and he compares the flow of languages to the flow of rivers. The Sundarbans as a place is thus described as a bridge between faiths and religions for many waves of settlers moved to the tide country in the course of the late nineteenth or early twentieth century, therefore leading to the establishment of a cross-cultural space. This depiction of the tide country evokes interconnectedness between language and land, and in extenso between nature and culture, which should not be considered in a dichotomous way.

Nevertheless, there are some more explicit references to climate change scattered in the novel, as some events directly point to this phenomenon. Firstly, on his way to Lusibari, Kanai meets his aunt Nilima, who is quite surprised that he chose to come via Canning because, as she says, no one uses this way anymore. When Kanai wonders why this is so, he soon gets an answer: "[b]ecause of the river", she said. 'It's changed'" (Ghosh 2004, 23). The observation of the impact of climate change on the environment is not a new thing. The fact that concerns about climate change have become particularly compelling does not mean that it is a new issue. Indeed, Nirmal already saw the first signs of a decline in climate matters and the state of the environment:

"Age teaches you to recognize the signs of death. You do not see them suddenly; you become aware of them very slowly over a period of many, many years. Now it was as if I could see those signs everywhere, not just in myself, but in this place that I had lived in for almost thirty years. The birds were vanishing, the fish were dwindling and from day to day the land was being reclaimed by the sea. What would it take, to submerge the tide country? Not much a minuscule change in the level of the sea would be enough". (Ghosh 2004, 215)

The Hungry Tide played a crucial role in garnering worldwide support against the Sahara project, which led the Central Ministry of Environment and Forests to terminate the project' (Anand 39). As Jalais explains, this project intended 'to build a world class city-centre spread over 250 km² of water surface planning to include a business centre, a cinema theatre, a cultural centre, club houses, health clubs, a helipad, etc' (Jalais 335)

and making the Sundarbans a touristic attraction, which would have led to the demise of the fragile ecosystem of the Sundarbans. The fact that the novel had such an impact proves that writers hold a certain power and this reinforces the necessity of writing on climate change in fiction, in the hope that it may stir the pot. In the following paragraph, I shall develop the manner in which climate change is depicted through genre and narration in *The Hungry Tide*.

The Hungry Tide still presents some intuitive elements that indicate Ghosh's concerns despite some inbuilt inability of fiction to approach the issue in a direct way. The remarkable elements that prepare further discussion about climate change are the following: as I tried to demonstrate, Ghosh chooses a very pertinent setting, the Sundarbans, for his novel. This mangrove forest is unique in terms of biodiversity but suffers from the consequences of climate change and is very prone to weather events such as cyclones and tidal waves. Furthermore, Ghosh places his novel in a perspective that favours a deconstruction of dichotomies, thus allowing us to approach a sense of interconnectedness, namely to recognize affinities between the global, the local, the human, the nonhuman, culture and nature, which are part of a continuum rather than being clear-cut categories. The language in *The Hungry Tide* further serves to construct this oblique approach to climate: through its watery imagery, the novel makes nonhuman agency visible. This is also exemplified on the level of the plot, since the cyclone and the tidal wave coincide with the climax of the novel. Still, the reach of the novel remains local and is difficult to expand as the weather events are described as personal, lived experiences. In the next section, I shall compare how *Gun Island*, Ghosh's 2019 novel, differs from *The Hungry Tide*, and I will point to the ways in which Ghosh's art of narrative evolved, giving his novel a larger scope in terms of climate change.

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Chapter – 18

RE-ACCENTUATION OF THE PAST IN TONI MORRISON’S BELOVED

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Abstract

Morrison’s overarching thematic concern throughout her oeuvre is with issues of African American female identity in the contemporary world. Her novels offer complex examinations of problems within the African-American community, power dynamics between men and women, and issues of racism in relations between black and white America. Her fictions are self-consciously concerned with myth, legend, storytelling and the oral tradition, as well as with memory, history and historiography, and have thus been recognized as postmodern meta-narratives. Morrison’s stories are conscious of African cultural heritage as well as African-American history, thus demonstrating the importance of the past to the struggles of contemporary African Americans. She employs strong elements of Black English in her dialogue and narration to express the importance of language in the formation of identity. Her novels often employ elements of magic, fantasy, and the supernatural, such as the characters in *Song of Solomon* who can fly, or the ghost of a dead child who appears in *Beloved*. Storytelling is historiography in Morrison’s fiction, and in each novel she carefully examines the role of narrative in the reconstruction of both the individual self and society at large.

This paper aims at analyzing how Morrison’s trilogy is concerned with fictive cultural documentaries that recall and record America’s past using African American historiography – cultural “truths” heretofore encoded and preserved orally in personal and communal recollections, re-memories, fables, folktales, music, gossip, humour, and lore—narratives that place the black past at the center of the American chronicle and perhaps negate those mainstream histories and fictions that marginalize, trivialize, or exclude the African American from their accounts.

Toni Morrison may well be the most formally sophisticated novelist in the history of African American literature. Indeed her signal accomplishment as a writer is that she has managed, uncannily, to invent her own mode of literary representation. As Toni Morrison established her place within the American literary canon, her writing has been for the most part well received both by critics writing for popular culture and those writing for academe. The numerous accolades and awards honoring Morrison for her contribution testify to her importance as one of the most prolific and talented writers of the twentieth and twenty first centuries. Critical responses to Morrison’s work focus on

her audience, stylistic technique, and major themes, and explore the role she plays as a precursor to new voices in American literature, especially African American women's literature, given her instrumental influence on the Black Women Writers' Renaissance in the last decades of the twentieth century. The critical response is also informed by the critics' need to categorize Morrison as a black woman writer, African American writer, American writer, woman writer, and critic. Whether in fiction or non-fiction, Morrison focuses her writing on a variety of topics including the intersections of race, class and gender, questions of home and place, the connection between the individual and the community, self-definition, and the importance of cultural, familial and individual history or rememory, and the connections between, and nurturing roles of African American folk culture and black cultural beliefs across the diaspora.

Morrison lays the groundwork for critics examining her writing by noting that her work is always political, always explores the conflict between the public and private aspects of one's life, and is always rooted in African American culture.

Morrison's overarching thematic concern throughout her oeuvre is with issues of African American female identity in the contemporary world. Her novels offer complex examinations of problems within the African-American community, power dynamics between men and women, and issues of racism in relations between black and white America. Her fictions are self-consciously concerned with myth, legend, storytelling and the oral tradition, as well as with memory, history and historiography, and have thus been recognized as postmodern meta-narratives. Morrison's stories are conscious of African cultural heritage as well as African-American history, thus demonstrating the importance of the past to the struggles of contemporary African Americans. She employs strong elements of Black English in her dialogue and narration to express the importance of language in the formation of identity. Her novels often employ elements of magic, fantasy, and the supernatural, such as the characters in *Song of Solomon* who can fly, or the ghost of a dead child who appears in *Beloved*. Storytelling is historiography in Morrison's fiction, and in each novel she carefully examines the role of narrative in the reconstruction of both the individual self and society at large.

Through her heroes and heroines Morrison forces readers to see the value of a life that is authentic because the individual assumes responsibility for self. They express either an effort of the will or a freedom of the will. Although she does not suggest that one can avoid life with others, she continually reminds us of the importance of "flying without ever leaving the ground" (*Song of Solomon*, 340), of accepting and performing the existential act of self-creation, and, consequently, of knowing what one must know "in order to become a complete, fully aware human being" (1978: 48). Consequently, Morrison's protagonists are usually characters in transition, journeying through mysterious circumstances and personal histories to the innermost psyche, often to a triumphant discovery of self-hood. Conceptually and thematically, an assessment of

Morrison's work is grounded in the premise that her fictional characters are marginal (liminal) personalities who lack social, spiritual, psychological, historical, geographical, or genealogical place or centre. Their betwixt - and betweenness necessarily involve them in a quest for personal and/or communal wholeness and fulfilment.

Since the publication of *Beloved*, Toni Morrison has become the name around which debates of considerable significance in American literature, culture, and ideology have amassed—these include debates about multicultural curricula; about the relation of slavery to Freedom; about the degree of determinism and/or freewill African Americans might experience; about the possibility of creating literature that is both aesthetically beautiful and politically engaging; about the interlocking relation to racism, sexism, and classism; about the ability to construct meaningful dialogues across entrenched differences; about the possibility of laying claim to lives and imaginations from within a post-modern, capitalist society.

This paper Aims at analyzing how Morrison's trilogy is concerned with fictive cultural documentaries that recall and record America's past using African American historiography – cultural “truths” heretofore encoded and preserved orally in personal and communal recollections, rememories, fables, folktales, music, gossip, humour, and lore—narratives that place the black past at the centre of the American chronicle and perhaps negate those mainstream histories and fictions that marginalize, trivialize, or exclude the African American from their accounts.

The central concerns of *Beloved* are the ethical dilemmas posed by slavery, the complex imperatives of individual and collective memory, the dynamics of the mother-child relationship and the importance of community. By focussing on a violent infanticide, which is publicly denounced despite its mitigating circumstances, Morrison illuminates slavery from the anguished perspective of its victims. Memories too painful and “evil” to bear can be submerged but inevitably return in the form of “ghosts”; Sethe views *Beloved* as the ghost of her daughter, while the distraught *Beloved* transfers her feelings for her late mother to Sethe. In contrast to traditional Abolitionist accounts of slavery, in which the evils of slavery and the virtues of the oppressed are rendered in stark opposition, Morrison focuses on difficult ethical problems regarding relations among slaves and former slaves. Prominent among dilemmas Morrison addresses within the mother-child context are abandonment, infanticide, and suicide – the complexity and ambiguity which are exacerbated by the realities of slavery. Through her dramatization of Sethe and Denver's isolation from the black community Sethe's refusal to seek expiation, and their eventual reintegration into the community, Morrison demonstrates the importance of community ties for the individual's well-being.

Beloved is a novel which brings out Morrison's intention to deconstruct slavery, racism, patriarchy, social and historical conventions and even language. She proves herself to be a post-modern writer as she defamiliarises social and historical convention. As Derrida notes, "post-structural writers attempt to read peripheral margins in their work – a footnote, a recurrent minor term of image, a casual allusion" (1983: 133). Henry Louis Gates, Jr. in his book *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Literary Criticism* (1988) speaks of signifying—one text playing upon another—usually repeating it but making significant changes or inverting it. However, he distinguishes between the African-American usage of "signifying(g)" from the European linguist concept "signifying" by using a capital letter and by placing the final consonant in parenthesis. Gates argues that the signifying(g) of black narratives – the linguistic playing, punning, coding, decoding and recording – found in African-American texts – emerges from the pressing necessity for political, social and economic survival:

All of Morrison's novels are, in a real sense, "historical novels," quasi documentaries that bear historical witness. Her characters are both subjects of and subjects to history, events in "real" time, that succession of antagonistic movements that includes slavery, Reconstruction, Depression, and War. Yet she is also concerned with the interaction of history with art, theory and even fantasy, for, in her terms, history itself may be no more than a brutal fantasy, a nightmare half-remembered, in which fact and symbol become indistinguishable. Toni Morrison reinscribes a history that is less individual than racial and national; hers is also a psychic and a mythic history, a feminine subtext, the kind Cixous and Clement describe in *The Newly Born Women* as "a history, taken from what is lost within us of oral tradition, of legends and myths—a history arranged the way tale-telling woman tell it"

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Chapter – 19

ANALYSIS OF TEMSULA AO'S LABURNUM FOR MY HEAD IN THE LIGHTS OF ECOFEMINISM

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ABSTRACT

Women and nature are closely knit as women have a close involvement with natural resources in day to day to life. Women's perspective about nature is different from men's perspective, as women give importance to protecting nature by their priority and choices in which man fail. Eco feminism reflects the connection between women and nature as constructed by society especially as a result of contemporary patriarchy. Temsula Ao, being Naga women, is closely associated with nature and she suggests both nature and women to emancipate from the shackles of society and power. She advocates Ecofeminism through her writings like "*Laburnum for My Head*" portrays her real zeal for protecting the nature.

KEYWORDS: Ecofeminism, Northeast nature and culture, male domination.

INTRODUCTION

Ecofeminism is the social movement that regards the oppression of women and nature as inter connected. The basic point that all Ecological feminists defend is that, Environment is a feminine issue, that there is an interconnection between the domination over women and domination over nature.

The North East region of India is referred to as, The Eight Sisters comprising of Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland and Sikkim. This region of India is one of the most culturally vibrant, as the people belong to ethnic groups, culture and communities. It is a place of eternal beauty. Temsula Ao is one of those writers who write to awaken the souls of their society and to alert them about the real importance of the tribal community, she writes with the responsibility to preserve and pass the oral tradition which she has inherited from her forefathers. Her poetry is a revival of lost identity by reciting her cultural legacy and making it relevant for the new generation. Ecofeminism is an integral part of Temsula Ao's writings.

Temsula Ao is one of the most eminent contemporary folklorists, academics and poets, who writes the inherent instability of any oral tradition in her works- “*These Hills Called Homes*” (2006) and “*Laburnum For My Head*” (2009) are her very widely known collections of short stories, added to these ‘*Songs to Tell*’, ‘*Songs that try to say*’, ‘*Songs of Many Moods*’, ‘*Songs from Here and There*’ etc. are some of her notable collections of poetry. Naga by birth Ao’s works heavily reflect the culture, traditions, practices and beliefs of the people of Nagaland. As a representative of her culture, she infused in her poetry the voices and concerns for her people and her land.

Temsula Ao is one of the rising women writers of Northeast India. Her poems, short stories and fictions are set in the lush green forest and hills of the north-east India. She writes about her own people, their emotions and her own traditions and belief (Naga tradition). Her short story collection, *Laburnum for My Head*, beautifully depicts a deep understanding of the human condition and illustrates different facets of ordinary men and women’s life. Ao successfully presents women as they are engaged in complex and difficult social and psychological problems. An analysis of the women characters of her stories reveals the strength of women in different human situations. She delineates them with their variegated swings of mood, the ebb and flow of joy and despair. We also get an insight into their feelings perceived and desires suppressed. The analysis of her women characters would remain incomplete if we fail to realize how intimately they are integrated with nature. If in some story nature/ecology is a co-sufferer with women in the patriarchal order, then at other instance it is an objectification of her untold joys and sorrows or even in some other it is something capable of giving a woman a sense of immortality.

Temsula Ao’s touching description of human life and human condition are set in the backdrop of the lush green forest of North-east India. This paper is an attempt to unveil the hidden but intricate relationship between nature and women in her short story collection, *Laburnum for My Head*. This paper tries to analyze Temsula Ao’s short story ‘*Laburnum for My Head*’ in the light of Eco feminism.

The first story of this collection ‘*Laburnum for My Head*’ at the very first reading may seem as a strange obsession of a women, called Latina, for Laburnum flowers. Unable to successfully grow a laburnum plant in her garden during her lifetime, she wants to have one over her grave!

‘Standing beyond the southernmost corner of vast expanse Of the old cemetery-dotted with concrete vanities, both ornate And simple- the humble Indian Laburnum bush erupts in glory; With its blossoms of yellow-mellow beauty.’

Latina, is enchanted by the beauty of this nature and she defies the patriarchal set up of the society. Her husband was a respected and prominent member of the society and so,

his funeral services were long and elaborate. She could envisage that he surely be given a 'grandiose headstone' over his 'fresh grave'. By standing in the middle of several tomb stones, she thinks on 'Man's puny attempts to defy death as if erecting these memorials would bring the dead back to life'. But these concrete structures, how could they act like a 'permanent embodiment of the person', they are forgotten or recalled occasionally; the names inscribed on them sometimes read only as 'incidental pass-time.'

Each tombstone in the cemetery proudly possesses the name of the deceased human. But the woman, Latina, wants the "plots ...designated by Numbers only", and no names. As if trying to assert that names are only social constructs imposed on human after birth, and therefore should be removed with death. Latina frees herself from this social construct by having just a laburnum over her grave. By choosing her grave-site herself before death and denying the 'already embarked [space] beside my master [her husband]', she gets free from the patriarchal hold. Very interestingly, she is even out of the male-controlled economic setup of the society; as she is heard retorting her sons and daughter-in-law's "I have not spent anyone else's money...you need not worry about any headstone for me." With her liberation she also wants to liberate nature from the cruelties of man – "This consecrated ground has thus become choked with the specimens of human conceit" – and so the new cemetery only has "flowering trees and not headstones ... erected on the gravesites", which bestow "an environment liberated from all human pretensions to immortality."

Latina is not happy with the names being inscribed on the tombs of people, to her name is just a social construction imposed on human after birth, instead, she chooses to have a laburnum plant over her grave. She has chosen her grave site herself against the traditions, away from her husband's, this gesture is a closure of her desire to free herself from the shackles of the patriarchy. She even out of male centered economic set up of the society. She has spent her own money for her chosen grave.

The laburnum flowers appealed to Latina because of their beauty and also because she 'attributed humility' to their gesture of hanging their heads earthward; and was what she called the 'femininity' of these flowers. So, at last women and humble nature are seen to integrate themselves into some extraordinary permanence, 'something extraordinary', which displays its glory of buttery-yellow splendor every May!

CONCLUSION

Latina always fascinated with the humility of the laburnum flowers as they hang their heads earthwards, and she called it the 'femininity' of those flowers.

Thus, the short story laburnum for my head by Temsula Ao displays the integral relationship between women and nature and their permanence.

Ecofeminism in Ao's text beacons at the patriarchy which devalues women, and therefore, actually devalues nature because nature is seen as mother of humankind. It is a truth that women and nature get trashed together in the modern society. Anything patriarchy associates with women-caring, compassion, maternity, emotions, looking after nature is also trashed. To survive the climatic emergency, we need to know we are part and parcel of Mother Nature. Tamsula Ao's concern and love for nature and tradition inspires the readers to value nature and women alike for the all round development of the society and the world as a whole.

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Chapter – 20

ECO FEMINISTIC REFLECTIONS IN SUGATHA KUMARI’S “NIGHT RAIN”

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Abstract

Ecofeminism is a socio-political movement that signifies the relation between the environment and feminism. It emerged in the 1970s and 80s as a new strain of feminism, which concerns both environment and feminism. Sugatha Kumari, a modern and renowned poet from Kerala, often called the greenest poet, and environmental activist has opened the windows to untold possibilities in bringing the concept to the limelight. Her popular poem, Night Rain, is a heartfelt rendition of a women’s pain and pallor interwoven with night rain.

Keywords: - Ecofeminism, critical analysis, Night Rain.

INTRODUCTION

Eco/Ecological feminism is a movement that concerns the status of both environment and women, simultaneously. This term, Ecofeminism, was coined by Francoise d’Eaubonne in 1974. This philosophy emphasizes the ways both nature and women are treated by a male-dominated or patriarchal society.

Ecofeminism, emerged as a theoretical discipline in the 1970s, with the third wave of Feminism. Among all the renowned writers of Malayalam, Sugatha Kumari is one who experimented with ecofeminism. Besides, she is being literary personnel; Sugatha Kumari was a very popular Environmental activist, who led the Silent Valley Struggle (1973-80), successfully.

Sugatha Kumari was born in Kerala, into a well-versed family, as the second of three daughters. Most of her earlier works dealt with the tragic quest for love and were considered more lyrical than her later works, in which the quiet, lyrical sensibility is replaced by increasingly feminist responses to social disorder and injustice. Environmental issues are also sharply portrayed in her poetry.

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF 'NIGHT RAIN'

The poem "Night Rain" was originally written by Sugatha Kumari in her mother tongue 'Malayalam', with the title 'Rathrimazha' and it was translated by her elder sister 'Hridaya Kumari' with the present title, Night Rain, in 1977.

The poem 'Night Rain' metaphorically compares the emotions of women with the night rain, throughout the poem we could consistently observe the emotional connection between women and the night rain. The Night Rain is lyrical in form and embodies the psychological as well as the physical pains of women. The rhetorical question, from its last stanza;

*How do I know all this?
My friend, I too, am like you,
Like you, rain at night.*

Shows, how the emotions of women are equated with night rain. The narrator, as the poem presents us, heaving with sickness, withering pain, and plaguing paleness, the night rain soothingly arrives at her sickbed, just like a priest attending the sick waiting for the divine revelation. In these lines, the poet not only identifies the rain as a soothing companion but as herself.

In the first stanza, the poet personifies the rain as a 'mad young woman, who without a pause 'weeping, laughing' and is 'sitting huddled up, tossing her long hair, the very first stanza of the poem reflects, not only the sickness of the body but also of her psyche. In the second stanza of the poem, the rain, and its arrival have been described as:

*Night rain,
Pensive daughter of the dusky dark,
Gliding slowly like a long wail.*

These lines have setup the insidious tone for the poem. This pensive daughter has slowly entered the hospital through the window and touching her brings the image of death, itself. In the forthcoming stanza, the rain is personified as a dear one, coming through the gloom with comforting words, this line shows us how dependent the poet is on nature for her sane and sanctity. It is in the kind embrace of nature the poet found the peace and sanctum, that the materialistic world can never provide her with.

The diseased parts can be cut and removed,

But what can be done with the diseased heart?

These lines readily vitalize the feministic perspective of the poem that is dying to be discovered and diligently described. Through the next two stanzas, the poet outlines the eternal companionship that nature provides to the feminine heart. The poet says nature was the one who witnessed 'her love' but is 'now witness my grief'. She says the night rain once 'lulled me to sleep on those auspicious nights long ago, but now the night rain helplessly witnessing as she 'reel with pain, alone. The night rain, which once made her 'thrilled with joy and laugh', now watching her as she 'freezes into a stone. The last stanza of the poem is an apt conclusion as the poet identifies herself with nature.

***My friend, I too, am like you,
Like you, rain at night.***

This is the soul of the whole poem, where the poet identifies herself with nature and it leads us to analyze the poem from the ecofeminist perspective. This stanza shows the authentic union of the feminine sensibility with nature. Just like the child prodigy from Bengal, Toru Dutt identifies herself with the Casuarina tree, the poet, here, identifies herself with the night rain. This stanza witnesses the fortifying and formidable relationship between women and nature. After a night, during which both weep, both wipe away their tears and 'forcing a smile, they put on a bold act to hide the disputes. Their 'pity and suppressed rage', and their sad yet kind music tells the story of the prolonged exploitation and oppression that both, nature and women had to receive from the hands of subjugation and patriarchy.

The last stanza of the poem reminds us of Shashi Deshpande's short story "The Beloved Charioteer" where the mother of Aarthi, a widower, pours her heart out to her daughter about her husband and the way he belittles Aji for everything.

CONCLUSION

Sugatha Kumari's poems skilfully embody this ecofeminist perspective in all its glory and grade. The "mother figure" that is metaphorical of nature in her poems is omnipotent with the power to protect or to torture and destroy. In this poem, we could see the clear similarity that nature and women share in the name of unjust suffering, but it is not characterized as a feature of vulnerability, the poem also gives the right amount of recognition to the sacrificial attitude excited by nature and women.

Thus, the poem, Night Rain (Rathrimazha) is a lyrical poem, which personifies nature, and explains the poet's overpowering love for nature and her deep relation with nature.

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Chapter – 21

THEME IN VIKRAM CHANDRA'S THE SACRED GAMES

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ABSTRACT

Indian English literature today is an independent discipline and the term Indian writing in English in recent times has achieved reputable scholastic status. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar observes, "What makes Indo-Anglian literature an Indian literature and not just a ramshackle outhouse of English literature is the quality of its 'Indianness' in the choice of its subjects, in the texture of thought, and play of sentiment, in the organization of materials and in the creative use of language." (1978:8.) V.K. Gokak also remarks in this context, "The Indianness of Indian writing consists in the writer's intense awareness of his entire culture." (1978:24.). The postmodern Indian English novels are written by Indian writers with freshness, glamour, humour, satire, and hybrid culture. New novelists rejected the old form and followed the new form and content and followed new techniques in rendering their stories in a new way. Vikram Chandra belongs to the middle of the 1990's, who established himself as a prominent literary icon in the history of Indian English novelists. Chandra is one of the followers of Rushdie in the style of writing. As a writer, Chandra hooks his audience with two baits, first there is his powerful use of language. Vikram Chandra's second novel and third literary work is *Sacred Games* (2006), a crime novel, a detective story, and a suspense thriller.

KEY WORDS: Indianness, Sacred Games, Crime, Suspense and Thriller.

INTRODUCTION

Indian English literature today is an independent discipline and the term Indian writing in English in recent times has achieved reputable scholastic status. K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar observes, "What makes Indo-Anglian literature an Indian literature and not just a ramshackle outhouse of English literature is the quality of its 'Indianness' in the choice of its subjects, in the texture of thought, and play of sentiment, in the

organization of materials and in the creative use of language.”(1978:8.) V.K. Gokak also remarks in this context, “The Indianness of Indian writing consists in the writer’s intense awareness of his entire culture.” (1978:24.)

Thus Indian English novels have shown richness, diversity, and a capacity to accommodate a wide range of concerns. In the period of 1930s and 1940s ‘*Big Three*’ have depicted realistic aspects and mythical imagination of Indian antiquity and sensibility. Bhabani Bhattacharya and Khushwant Singh have offered valuable insight into pathos and human degradation caused by political upheavals. The women writers as Kamala Markandaya and Anita Desai have focused on urban sensibility. Post-colonial novelists as Arun Joshi, Vikram Seth, Salman Rushdie, Rohinton Mistry, Kiran Nagarkar, Arundhati Roy, and Jhumpa Lahiri have all helped in recovering and enriching the creative and critical heritage of India. They have used a new technique of combined reality and fantasy in the novels. They have used code mixing of language and flashback method in the novels.

Fictional narratives in the wake of postmodernism have undergone radical changes. Narrative forms kept on changing with the experimentation in surrealism and under the French nouveau-roman tradition. Fictional narratives thus have always been subjected to fresh approaches and new experiments. Magic realism is one such mode of *recit de fiction* that has occasioned taking its inspiration from postmodernism. The novelist at times assumes the form of an omnipresent narrator thereby establishing a close link with characters and situations through his views.

The postmodern Indian English novels are written by Indian writers with freshness, glamour, humour, satire, and hybrid culture. New novelists rejected the old form and followed the new form and content and followed new techniques in rendering their stories in a new way.

The novelists of this period mainly depict metropolises, their inhabitants, their problems, plights, culture and their way of life. The reason for this is that “the nation itself has moved from the village centrism of the Gandhian era to the city centrism of the post-Nehru period” (Jon Mee, 2014:359). Some critics, however, believe that Indian writers in English have taken advantage of this trend to retreat into metropolitan or cosmopolitan elitism which produces literature intended only for the English-reading privileged classes within India or the international public outside.

Vikram Chandra belongs to the middle of the 1990’s, who established himself as a prominent literary icon in the history of Indian English novelists. Chandra is one of the followers of Rushdie in the style of writing. As a writer, Chandra hooks his audience with two baits, first there is his powerful use of language. He carefully constructed sentences to express profound thoughts and complex emotions with startling clarity.

Second, he possesses the storyteller's art of keeping his audience guessing. As the tales turn and twist like mountain roads, the audience is never quite certain where they will end up.

THEME

Vikram Chandra's second novel and third literary work is *Sacred Games* (2006), a crime novel, a detective story, and a suspense thriller. Vikram Chandra's novel draws deep into the life of Inspector Sartaj Singh – and into the criminal underworld of Ganesh Gaitonde, the most wanted gangster in India. Sartaj Singh, a seasoned and cynical Bombay police officer, is summoned by an anonymous tip one morning, by a voice which promises him an opportunity to capture the powerful Ganesh Gaitonde, criminal overlord of the G-Company. The confrontation between Sartaj and Ganesh lies at the heart of this epic novel. In this novel, Chandra has built his multistoried novel inhabited by dons and cops, starlets and pimps, politicians and assassins, undercover operators and mysterious godmen, not with raw material collected from the junkyard of history. *Sacred Games* concerns itself with all the big themes: crime, wealth, friendship, honesty, and the way we live and love. Most of all, perhaps, it is a novel about Mumbai. It is portrayed as a city of infinite possibilities, capable of magically transforming the lives of some of those who come here for a living. In the novel *Sacred Games* one gets a direct visage of the Leviathan of corruption. One sees characters transforming from rags to riches but the way they chose lands them in trouble because of the ill-gotten wealth through violence, adultery, jealousy and to sum the novel presents an epitomic picture of the darker side of the humanity under testing circumstances. Like Faustus one finds that unrealistic ambition for wealth is found in almost all characters except for Sartaj Singh. More comprehensive treatment of the major novels is in the following chapters.

Sacred Games is a literary novel that is also a crime novel, a detective story, and a thriller. Sartaj Singh, a seasoned and cynical Bombay police officer, is summoned by an anonymous tip one morning, by a voice which promises him an opportunity to capture the powerful Ganesh Gaitonde, criminal overlord of the G-Company. Vikram Chandra's novel draws the reader deep into the life of Inspector Sartaj Singh and into the criminal underworld of Ganesh Gaitonde, the most wanted gangster in India.

The confrontation between Sartaj and Ganesh lies at the heart of this epic novel. As the stakes mount and Sartaj seeks knowledge of his prey, it becomes clear that the game the two players thought they were engaged in is in fact part of a much larger scenario, one that expands beyond their city and implicates the planet. Around this story,

Vikram Chandra has constructed an opulent, exhilarating narrative, one that bridges the serious and the popular, recalling the great and capacious novels of the 19th century.

Like the city it is set in, *Sacred Games* teem with stories – love stories, crimes, stories of displacement, of ambition, of moral conundrums, of life – lives – and death. In its nearly thousand pages, Vikram Chandra manages to interweave multiple genres, each as compelling as the other, each intertwined storyline finding its own moving, violent, spectacular resolution. The story of Inspector Sartaj Singh's pursuit of the gangland don, Ganesh Gaitonde is one of the great detective thrillers of our time. It is as pacy as a potboiler, as grand and as ambitious as an epic (Corey Redecop, Winnipeg free press; Canada. 2006).

The policeman Sartaj Singh first appeared in the story "Kama" in *Love and Longing in Bombay*. Sartaj Singh is "past forty, a divorced police inspector with middling professional prospects," whose pursuit of Ganesh Gaitonde, "a charming, ruthless, selfish gang boss who purges people," forms the locus of the action of *Sacred Games*. In Chandra's latest work, Sartaj's discovery of the corpses of the gangster Gaitonde and his moll in a nuclear bunker near stacks of newly counterfeit rupees sets off a chain of events. Through chance more than deduction, the investigation leads the police officer to the sinister Guruji who is plotting a nuclear holocaust in Bombay to be blamed on Indian Muslims and Pakistan, with inevitable consequences.

This dirty adventure of savagery draws upon the best of Victorian fiction, puzzle books, Bollywood films and Chandra's first-hand research in the city of Mumbai. Sartaj Singh, the turbaned spruce policeman in "Kama" in *Love and Longing in Bombay* is the legend of *Sacred Games*. Similarly as Kashmir is a staggering presence in the books of Salman Rushdie, Chandra's Bombay is the cutting edge Indian city packed with stories that are holding up to be told. This book reproduces a world that does its setting supreme justice. In both shape and substance, Chandra's novel announces a self-admitted copying of the nineteenth century communist books and analyst fictions. As the blurb of the book reads: "Drawing motivation from the works of art of nineteenth-century fiction, secret books, Bollywood motion pictures and Chandra's own particular life and research in the city of Mumbai, *Sacred Games* brings out with wrecking authenticity the way we live now; however reverberates with the knowledge and enthusiastic profundity of the best of writing". The similitudes are clear in components of 'authenticity' and the devotion with which the novel depicts the perplexing 'substances' of the general public. Most commentators praising the novel focus on this component of 'authenticity' and Chandra's master make exposing the concealed underbelly of India. The judges for the Crossword grant for English fiction, Anita Roy, Mukul Kesavan and Shoma Choudhury, attested their decision of the book in acknowledgment of Chandra's quality as "an ace of the Close-up-zooming to catch each subtlety and detail of his characters' lives" (Citation by Judges). Another commentator for *The Independent* (UK), Soumya Bhattacharya brings up the commendable authenticity of the novel, calling it a "trip in the delights of authenticity: the sort of mental authenticity that drops from 19th century

European and English fiction". (<http://www.vikramchandra.com/publications/sacred-games/>)

Sacred Games shows the reality of the clashes between the police and the criminals. The novel unravels with the conflict between the inspector, a Sikh member of Mumbai police force, Sartaj Singh, and the most wanted gangster in India, Ganesh Gaitonde. Sartaj Singh, a divorcee in his middle age, is more practical and his career is as motionless as his love life. Like his father, he is a good detective police. Sartaj, a decent man living in a corrupt environment sees his colleagues writhing in the clutches of corruption.

One morning, to Sartaj's surprise, he gets an anonymous hint about the renowned mafia don Ganesh Gaintonde being locked up in a nearby safe trench. The don wanted to meet Sartaj Singh but he does not know the reason why the underworld don has desired to see him. And the day before, he was called to a man barred in his bedroom for his wife wanted to kill him. She attacks this inmate, the scared husband, with knife because he had flung his wife's adorable pet out of a fifth floor window. Actually the novel opens with this scene.

Sartaj and his constable Katekar reach Kailashpade, the hiding place of Gaitonde. He keeps an eye through surveillance equipment and explains to him the story of the entry of his life into organized crime. Sartaj stays listening to Gaitonde as he unravels the mystery of his first adventures in Mumbai. Gaintonde is a medium built person with mediocre features and with no prominent characteristics. No drinking and smoking, he cares about his health, exercise every day and reads Gita and is a yoga fan.

Ganesh Gaitonde, the gangster from a Hindu background, maintains a big circle of criminal undertakings. He is into drugs, matka (gambling), smuggling and construction. He is a haughty mafia don and ruthless killer with gigantic ambition. He is a mafia leader who climbed the power ladder from abject poverty. He has even established a company named G-Company. He is the wealthiest don of Mumbai's most heinous criminal gangs. He has furtively collaborated with another Indian to execute an atomic attack in the city. The responsibility of the act is attributed to an Islamic terrorist organization that has been created for this purpose. Gaintonde has unsuspectingly assisted in the smuggling of the nuclear material. Later he understands his mistake and attempts to abort the attack. And he is waiting in the atomic shelter at Kailshpada, where he will survive the city's destruction in the bunker. There is an unidentified lady cohort with him. They planned to stop the nuclear attack, allegedly masterminded by his Guruji Swami Shridhar Shukla. The exact opposite of the don is Sartaj, an honest and straightforward policeman. Sartaj seems to be one of the characters present in modernist rendition in that Sartaj still believes in the values which have lost their hold in the current times.

Gaintonde had concealed himself in the bunker and Sartaj was outside the building. He tries to persuade Gaitonde to come out of the bunker but he refuses because he knew very well that on leaving the bunker, Sartaj will arrest him. Eventually, Sartaj finds the dead bodies of the don and his accomplice after the demolition of the hideout. Now the presence of that beautiful accomplice becomes an intriguing mystery to Sartaj. The incident attracts RAW officials who normally protect the country from external intrusion and terrorism. They try to investigate the don's case from that global perspective. The spot-suicide of the don and his concubine and the links to potential terror are all incidents featuring the nihilistic aspect of the postmodern era. People do not consider basic morals valuable and there is always scepticism in the air. Chandra's presentation brings along with it the hint that he drew liberally from the previous writers. This kind of re-characterising archetypes is the core feature of intertextuality of postmodernism.

The novel abounds with a few different characters uncovering the multifaceted aspects of the Mumbai urban life – the movie bars, the lower white collar class life of the constables, the chawls or ghettos, the system of religious masters and the degenerate legislators. In any case, the fundamental focal point of the novel is on Gaitonde's relating of his initial days, the beginning and summation of his criminal vocation and his definitive passing.

Presently, the story goes in reverse. Ganesh Gaitonde becomes another protagonist of this novel, the polar opposite of Sartaj Singh. Gaitonde transforms from a runaway young person Kiran to a famous criminal in Mumbai, accepting the name Ganesh Gaitonde. Master Ji as his otherworldly guide, a universally popular Guru-Ji, turns into his close quarters. He finds that his Guru-Ji has helped Ganesh come in contact the Guru Swami Shrinidhar Shukla. His main goal is bolstered messianic dreams by Guru-Ji who names him Arjuna to mean his warrior status. He has human emotions and takes great care of his representatives. Ganesh Gaitonde is the richest head of one of Mumbai's most intense criminal gangs, who has furtively teamed up with the Indian to bear on a nuclear assault that will obliterate the city keeping in mind the end goal to ascribe obligation to an Islamic that has been created for this reason. Ganesh Gaitonde has accidentally helped in the importation of atomic weapon. Later he understands his slip-up and endeavored to stop the assault, and holds up in the nuclear shelter at Kailashpada, where he will survive the city's demolition. His lone buddy is Jojo Mascarenas. They intended to stop a nuclear assault for the benefit of the humankind, composed by his Guru-Ji Swami Shridhlar Shukla.

It is not only the characters that are adopted by Chandra but the images of the bloodshed, the chaos, and the crime are all natural components of the postmodern society. It should be remembered that there is as much complexity in the attitudes of all

human beings as there is in the idea of postmodern ideology. Chandra highlights the bare and dishonest face of the Indian police. The police department itself has been corrupted incorrigibly. All the policemen are in the tangles of bribery. The defenders of the law, that is the policemen and the politicians, are described as the bribe-lords. The sections of the novel which deal with the outrageous behaviour of the police and the politicians mirror these qualities as necessarily being human instincts of the postmodern society.

Sartaj perseveres in his honesty initially until he is overwhelmed at one point and thinks: "Others from his batch had climbed past him; he was just pedaling along, doing his job. He looked into his future and saw that he would not achieve as much as his own father, and much less than the redoubtable Parulkar. "I'm quite useless, Sartaj thought, and felt very bleak" (p. 10).

The novel actually has two mafia dons, Ganesh Gaitonde and Suleiman Isa. Ganesh Gaitonde is from a Hindu background and has established his own company, G-Company. On the other hand, Suleiman Isa, a Muslim don names his as S-Company. These two companies are the most dangerous companies and proliferate terror in Mumbai. They have a strong hold on the politicians, police, administrators and film industry. Everyone knows them very well. Ganesh's life is full of ill-gotten abundance and he gets what he wants. "Gaitonde had been the first man in any of the city's jails, perhaps the first man in all of Mumbai, to own a cellular phone. With it, safe in his cell, he had run the essential trades of drugs, matka, smuggling and construction" (p. 31). Sartaj says, "I thought you had friends everywhere, Gaitonde. Everyone everywhere is a friend of Gaitonde Bhai's, isn't it? In the government, in the press, even in the police force" (p. 32). The mafia don has unrelenting grasp on every established system of Mumbai and the government has assumed a passive role.

Gaitonde is the unclaimed monarch of Mumbai. He informs Sartaj how he has built a huge empire of delinquency. Initially, he had to struggle but now he has a great control on Bombay city and everyone knows him. He says: "I gathered the boys who made up my company, Gaitonde company, it was called, or G-company, and we were quickly famous. Not yet in papers, but in the north and east of Mumbai the basti dwellers knew us, and the police, and the other companies" (p.112).

Mumbai is a safe haven for the dons, the public are scared of mafia dons and treat them as demi gods and worship them. They are considered to be the employment providers. Gaitonde says to Sartaj, "Mothers came to me then. 'A job in the post office for my boy, Ganesh Bhai', one said. 'Settle him somewhere, Ganesh Bhai', another said. 'You know best'. They wanted jobs and justice, and blessings" (p. 112). Gaitonde was a felonious don, but he is not completely spoilt and there are few decent qualities. "Gaitonde was very religious, and he conducted pujas quite often" (p.161). He worships, sings *bhajans*

and reads Gita. He is a sort of hypochondriac. He does not smoke, drink and is a yoga practitioner. He donates money to temples. Even though he was good originally, but the circumstances moulded him into a bad creature.

The story after the don's death is revealed through the investigation plan of Sartaj Singh. In the beginning, Sartaj tries to convince Gaitonde to show up outside the bunker but the don refuses and Sartaj orders to annihilate the building only to find two dead bodies inside the structure. Nobody has any clue about the unknown lady with the don and it turned into a mystery. The RAW agent, Anjali Mathur persists to get complete details of Gaitonde and that unknown lady. Somehow, Sartaj gets a clue and approaches Iffatbibi, the maternal aunt of the Muslim don, Suleiman Isa. Iffatbibi tips off Sartaj about the address of Pritam Dance Bar where he meets Naina Aggarwal. When Sartaj shows her the photo of the dead woman, she identifies that lady as Jojo whom Naina Aggarwal recommended to modelling agencies.

The character Jojo is used by Vikram Chandra to disclose many secrets aspects of the film industry. Jojo was a model, co-ordinator and owned a TV production company and financed many programmes. She earned much through maintaining prostitution houses. She trapped beautiful and unsuspecting girls who wanted to become models and heroines and sent these girls as whores to rich people. After her murder, the police seize a huge amount of unaccounted money, about six lakhs, from her apartment. During the investigation Sartaj meets Jojo's sister Mary Mascarenas, a middle aged divorcee who is in a financial crisis. She is not well and has been lonely. Sartaj asks Mary about Jojo and vents her anger at Jojo and confesses that she was an accomplice of the mafia don in several despicable activities. She gives details to Sartaj about the life of Jojo. Vikram Chandra draws parallels in the lives of Ganesh Gaitonde and Jojo. Out of helplessness and poverty they became victims of the society.

In this novel another subplot has Dipika, the second-oldest daughter of Pritosh Shah, who suffers because her lover belongs to Dalit caste. Shah is an extremely talented money manager of gangsters including Ganesh Gaitonde. Dipika loves her college friend Prashant but he is from a different caste. Even though they want to marry with each other Dipika is well aware that her father will not okay such marriage. And victims as they are, they searched for opportunities to victimize the people in their relevant areas of crime.

Muslims are a minority in India and many Hindus burn their muslim bastis and murder them viciously. To avenge Hindus, the Muslims use RDX and bombs due to which many innocent people died. Sometimes, communal riots cannot be contained by the police force. Bipin Bhonsle of this novel is a vicious leader and wants to encroach on the government land inhabited by Muslims. To fulfil his greed he entices the Hindu don

(Gaitonde) to annihilate the Muslim basti and reveals his vicious desire to burn down the place. Bipin negotiates with Gaitonde.

So, the deal is settled at sixty lakhs and Bipin pays the sum to Gaitonde. The next day the don executes his plan and burns down the basti. There is an outbreak of violent communal riots devouring many lives in the process. The riot continued for a long time. The incident reminds us of June 1979 when the government scooped out the poor from an area in Bombay forcefully. The government announced that the land inhabited by the poor people belongs to it. Consequently, the police took control of the area and bulldozed the huts ruthlessly, after which 50,000 slum dwellers were rendered shelterless.

The novelist unravels the ethnic rivalry between Hindus and Muslims through the chief characters with an aim to offer a firsthand experience of the nature and brutality that existed for ages and the claws of such sadistic animosity still rip through the flesh of innocuous victims. Ganesh Gaitonde and Suleiman Isa run their own companies. But the companies can be run only with workers in them. But nobody would wish to work as the angels of death. So the gangsters create a game of sentiments so that they can play with the feelings. The dons got their job easily done this way because Indians' ignorance can be easily manipulated as and when they wanted. These funded riots do not affect the perpetrators; rather they target innocent people especially women and kids. Minute by minute the conditions worsen as the inhabitants cannot digest the cruelty meted out to their offspring and wives and eventually every one becomes a murderer thirsting to kill everyone who is not of their religious standard.

CONCLUSION

Chandra maintains a link between the past and the present of the characters so that readers have an in-depth acquaintance of the lives of all the characters to form an informed opinion on how the characters have been moulded by the conditions prevalent in the society, to make them what they are today. Probably this leaves a lasting impression of the characters on the readers' minds and one wonders why readers too themselves should not become a story telling disciple of Vikram Chandra. (<http://www.rediff.com/news/1998/apr/25vc.htm>).

Ultimately, *Sacred Games* reflects the big Bombay dream, about making good against the odds in a crime-ridden city that's depicted in the same way that Hammett and Chandler wrote about L.A. (but without an authorial slant), according to Andrew Holgate, (*New Statesmen*, 2007).

In its 900-odd pages, *Sacred Games* encompasses police procedural, political thriller, social portrait of modern Mumbai and flashbacks to India's post-colonial religious and

ethnic upheavals... Amazingly, Chandra keeps a firm grip on all these elements, and while the rise and fall of Gaitonde is the book's glamorous heart, it is the everyday detail – the death of a dog, a family outing or Sartaj's bleak home life – that make this huge novel worth immersing yourself in for several enjoyable weeks. — **Isobel Montgomery, *The Guardian* (UK).**

Sacred Games is so intriguing and so thoroughly constructed that it's difficult to escape from it and return to your daily life... Chandra's novel shows that life, any life, is a game, a game which is, in equal parts, serious and insignificant, sacred and profane, pleasant and painful, familiar and alien: dice rolling on the ground that only death can stop. — **Jesús Aguado, *El País* (Spain).**

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Chapter – 22

**WOMEN AND SOCIETY: A STUDY OF THEMES AND ATTITUDES IN
ANITA NAIR'S NOVEL LADIES COUPE**

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Abstract

Literature has advanced from the different social worries which centre around the different social factors, for example, the distance, station framework, neediness, abuse of poor people, equivalent open doors for all, enlivening among ladies, strict change developments, arousing among the discouraged classes and so on. The current paper expects to investigate Anita Nair's covered up or immaculate subjects on different social, religious, political, practical and social real factors of Indian culture. She stands up diverse social, conjugal and mental perspectives worried about people in a general public.

Key words: Feminism, Freedom Man-woman relationship, Identity, Society.

Indian Literature in English has come as a turn of various social worries which have straightforwardly or in a roundabout way impacted the Indian culture. Most perceptibly, in Mulk Raj Anand's books, there is the activity of the philosophy behind the scenes. His *Across the Black Waters*, *Coolie*, *Two Leaves and a Bud*, *Untouchables* are steadfast records of the existences of the oppressed. He has introduced more extreme and drawn in writing some of the time ruthlessly, with divisions of standing, class and religion. R. K. Narayan likewise manages his significant philosophical twisted of brain towards the social issues which impact the existence of Indians in the different social conditions in his books *The Bachelor of Arts* and *The Dark Room*. Khushwant Singh composed *A Train to Pakistan*. His next original *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* presents an unexpected image of a joint Sikh family, illustrative of various Indian responses to the opportunity development of the forties. In the initial twenty years of

20th 100 years, the Indian English novel was profoundly impacted by the age making political, social and philosophical matures.

Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, there are likewise K. Nagrajan, Bhabhani, Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonkar, Khushwant Singh, Shashi, Deshpande, KamlaMarkandya, Anita Desai, AmitavGhose and so forth who extensively advanced Indian writing with their basic and heathen methodology on the social issues of Indian culture. The principal books of these writers hush up powerful in uncovering the genuine territory of Indian culture with regards to the treatment of ladies. This multitude of journalists was brought into the world after Indian Independence and English has no pioneer relationship for them. Their work is set apart by a noteworthy feel for language and totally credible show of contemporary India, with all its local varieties. They by and large expounded on the metropolitan working class, the layer of society they know best.

Generally, crafted by Indian ladies scholars has been underestimated because of man centric presumptions about the prevalent worth of male experience. One component adding to this bias is the way that the greater part of these ladies scholars expounded on the encased homegrown space, and ladies' impression of their experience inside it. Thus, it is expected that their work will naturally rank underneath crafted by male journalists who manage 'weightier' subjects. Moreover, Indian ladies essayists in English are casualties of a subsequent bias, versus their provincial partners. Anita Desai, Shashi Deshpande, Bharati Mukherjee and Shobha De uncommonly displays a consistent movement in setting of the three phases pushed by Elaine Showalter. Their female heroes show a mystic change navigating and developing continuously yet solidly through the individual phases of impersonation of custom, dissent and support of freedoms, and ultimately reflection prompting self-revelation which metamorphosezes them into solid, free, quick ladies able to experience the surges of life not just as a minority bunch yet with the insight of being strong supporting power for society all in all.

Ms. Poornima Gaur shows in her review ,*"A World of Their Own: Women at Crossroads in Anita Nair's Ladies Coupe"*, the excursion for self-revelation and understanding one's worth as individual incorporates accounts of six ladies who meet in a women car. The title Ladies Coupe, itself is figurative to the excursion of ladies from birth to death. It is a compartment held only for ladies, which can measure up to their conservative world, where they can share their grins, their tears, their conjugal life, darlings and kids - the most private and extraordinary snapshots of their lives with next to no concerns of openness, as every one of them are aliens to one another and likely could never at any point meet again. Yet, the normal position in every one of them is - they all are serious areas of strength for extremely are looking for genuine importance of life. The appeal of the review lies in the fiery depiction and the fervency it produces.

Feminism in Patriarchal Society

D. Silvia Flavia in her review "The Concept of Patriarchy and Female Defiance in Anita Nair's Ladies Coupe" presents an undeniably normal idea of man controlled society in which a lady is compelled by custom to be reliant upon men, disabled to understand her own solidarity. She has introduced her ladies battling one next to the other in light of man centric society however toward the end has provided them with a token of disobedience against male centric society. Her ladies have been depicted as canny, addressing ladies who are not satisfied with the foul play and insubordination to them. Imperialism and the idea of male controlled society are indistinguishable in women's activist talk as it underscores a relationship of disparity and bad form. However it appears to be that the provincial expert has disappeared from the colonized nations, the effect of colonization is as yet felt as man controlled society. Clearly just men devour the products of freedom though ladies are as yet exposed to abuse by the male as the frontier aces did on the colonized. Clearly the decolonized man declared his authority by his shameful treatment of ladies. So Anita Nair's ladies bring up the issue of their lifestyle merged by male controlled society, and see it not just as the site of their mistreatment at home and in the public eye yet in addition make it a field of fight to vanquish their oppressors.

Women impact on Society: Themes and Attitudes

It has been seen that in the past examinations, just female issues have been investigated in the books of Anita Nair. However, through her characters, she likewise makes a supplication for a superior lifestyle for ladies. Her books have Indians as focal characters, and she shifts back and forth between female-focused and male-focused story. People are correlative to one another. Indeed, even in this cutting edge time, ladies are viewed as not as equivalent to men but rather as the more fragile class. They go through concealment in a male overwhelmed society. These ladies are unvoiced animals of the general public.

Anita Nair assumes the part of a social pundit, as no essayist can disengage herself or himself from society, the savagery, the framework, the foul play around her. The books by such ladies essayists can't obliterate severe social designs; yet by bringing up issues, proposing re-evaluation and revaluating, they can assist in planning a cognizance which with canning at last achieve a productive and positive development in the public eye. Anita Nair in her original Ladies Coupé through the private discussion among the ladies of the Ladies Coupé depicts a genuinely huge piece of society of all financial levels and age gatherings. Saturated with the paths and climate of the city of Bangalore, the clever Cut Like Wound acquaints with the peruse a large group of extraordinary characters and their mental states in the general public. The novel, Lessons in Forgetting is an endearing story of reclamation, pardoning and fresh opportunities. She discusses writing in metropolitan India, the job of a corporate spouse as investigated in this book. She

centres around the negligible part of society. Her characters rebel against the social set up of society. She controls and haggles for engendering the working class values. Over the span of this excursion an unpretentious social change has been caught. In Anita Nair's second original *Ladies Coupe* (2001), Akhilandeswari nom de plume Akhila is the hero. She is a 45 year old maid. She, after the demise of her dad, is delegated as a personal expense agent. She has a place with a moderate Tamil Brahmin family. Presently she takes up the weight of the whole family on her young shoulders and assumes the parts of a little girl, sister, auntie and the bread sprinter. After some time, she chooses to get a one way train pass to the ocean side town of Kanyakumari. On way to Kanyakumari, she meets five different ladies, pays attention to their accounts in the compartment and tells her as well. With the assistance of the portrayal of six ladies, the writer features what man centric society means for the course of a lady's life. Our social and social qualities keep them inside the fenced in area of customary social set up. They face foul play and imbalance in varying backgrounds. From one viewpoint, conversations are completed about ladies strengthening; while then again, the clever puts a question mark on the current schooling system and social set up of contemporary India.

Anita Nair begins her excursion of social reconstruction right from the family. She presents that how family is up to speed from the different social ramifications where the social development of an individual is limited by his own loved ones. As a matter of fact, she has effectively depicted the moderate way of behaving of the group of the Tamil Brahmins. She disregards the different socio-moral directives in her clever *Ladies Coupe* which questions the situation with ladies in a custom bound social request that sees ladies only in the job of a respectful girl, a resigned spouse and a reproducer of kids. She brings the peruser into the core of ladies' life in contemporary India, uncovering how the problems that ladies face in their associations with spouses, moms, companions, representatives and youngsters. She shows the shocking issue of Indian lady in a male centric social request where female foeticide has developed vigorously. She goes through strenuous excursion in her life. At the point when brought into the world in a family she has a place with her dad, after marriage she should have a place with her better half and in advanced age, she relies upon the adult male kid. She is consistently a ward. Robert Fraser has brought up, "Indian lady's personality is one that is generally associated with and characterized by the social and social standards of a practicable structure"(44). She has been shackled genuinely as well as mentally by the shows and restrictions upheld by the way of life, established in the psyche of the individual and the memory of the general public and shocked by the male centric personality.

In Anita Nair's books, there are the dissensions or dissatisfactions in conjugal relationship which prompt a reasonable thoughtfulness in the heroes. Her characters don't ignore the significance of marriage as a social establishment and look for answers

for their conjugal issues with marriage. They look for a fair, viable way to deal with their concerns. They have the fortitude brought into the world of their tell the truth to themselves after an objective examination of their circumstance. They don't fault the others or their spouses for their difficulties, however fault additionally themselves. Their craving to look for answers for their concerns prompts their brief withdrawal from their families, trailed by an objective examination of the entire issue. They are customary on occasion in their methodology as they endeavor to look for personality and self-acknowledgment maintaining social shows and foundations. They are ladies who are people with attention to their privileges and obligations; they have genuine interests and anticipate a free, independent presence. Their conditions lead to their turning out to be intellectually experienced and they at last think about conjugal relationship as deserving of safeguarding. They are aware of the extraordinary social disparity and unfairness towards them and battle against the severe and inconsistent nature of the normal practices and decides that limit their capacity and presence as a spouse.

Anita Nair goes to the level of a social mastermind to the social reformer. She uncovered the different social wrongdoings, for example, following, corrosive tossing, honor killing, assaulting, assaults, female foeticide, killing people for cash or products. She features the way of life of social norm and male predominance. She sees that when poor people and persecuted ladies are conceived they are undesirable, when they must be hitched they are a monetary weight, when they have young lady infants they are violating the family, when they leave their homes, they are being provocative - thus it goes on. Ladies are as yet viewed as a man's ownership, they must be controlled. Men are terrified that they might lose that control. Nair further shows the position based customary social framework in her clever Idris. Her exceptionally ordered characters experience because of the unbending standing regulations in the general public. As a matter of fact, through her books, she attempts to battle from the requirements of position based customary social framework.

Conclusion

Anita Nair's works handle a boundless request that plainly exudes from her rootedness in regular India. Her central issue rises up out of her own current circumstance, from her nearby world, holding up mirror to the India based lives. She basically inspects the different social restrictions like marriage restrictions, instruction restrictions, rituals and customs, class and station restrictions. She verbalizes human feelings, the apprehensions and sentiments experienced by people. Her anxiety about the issues of persecuted and their journey for character causes one to think of her as books as sympathetic and social texts. Her composing is known for gallant and touchy treatment of critical and unmanageable subjects influencing the existences of the abused in the class trampled society.

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Chapter – 24

ECOFEMINIST PERCEPTIONS IN ANITHA DESAI'S *CRY, THE PEACOCK*

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Abstract

This paper will be dedicated to explore the resolute of ecofeminism in the novel *cry, the peacock* by Anitha Desai. The major finding of this research is to draw the association between how women are suppressed and oppressed by patriarchy and nature has been exploited and disturbed by human kinds in different pretentions. By reading of the novel through the lens of ecofeminism, the issue of domination and exploitation of women and nature has been brought out. In this research paper the women position and state of the environment are mirrored on several levels and the women seems to draw strength from their surroundings and I hope to colobrate on this paradox.Ecofeminism has gained a wide range of attention in terms of the degradation of nature and women. The hypothesis of the paper is to highlight the exploitation encountered by women and nature by the male dominated society.

Key words : Ecofeminism, nature, environment, exploitation, domination , destruction.

Ecofeminism is a movement and an ideology that sees gender equality climate change, social injustice more broadly as intrinsically related issues, all tied to masculine dominance in society. Especially ecofeminism holds that, most ecological issues can be traced back to the global prioritization of qualities deemed (precisely the ones some would regard as toxic, like aggression and domination) and those in power who embody those attributes. The term ecofeminism was coined by French feminist Froncoise, the disenfranchisement and oppression of women, people of color and the poor are intrinsically linked to the degradation of the natural world, as both arose as a result of patriarchal dominance. Vandana Shiva, the founder of the research foundation for science, Technology, and Ecology, and Carolyn merchant, author of "Death of Nature: Women, ecology and the scientific revolution" are the prominent pioneers for this movement since its inception. And also, the recent pioneers are Val Blumwood, Greta Gaard, Susan Griffin and so on.

Ecofeminism also calls attention to the fact that women are typically affected by the

patriarchal norms and environmental issues. According to the U.S report, because women worldwide hold less monetary wealth and rely on the natural environment more, they are more likely to be displaced by climate change and have to travel farther for resources like water, as dry seasons extend. My research paper shows how women are affected by the radiation of the patriarchal society. The main concern of this paper is how nature and women exploited by the human world and for the deep study of this concept, I have taken the novel *Cry, the Peacock*, by Anitha Desai.

Anitha Desai penned eighteen novels, within that more than, eleven novels received different awards. In the year 1978, she won Winifred Holt by memorial prize for the novel *Fire on the Mountain*, and in the same year. She received Sahitya Academy Award for the same novel. She acquired Alberto Moravio prize for literature (Italy) and recently she received Padma Bhushan Award in the year 2014. Her literary works confirm her supreme attitude and deliberation to solve things in the midst of the nature. And also she portrays woman life is predisposed and totally integrated by nature. Nature and women always display unique familiarities and also they are contiguous.

Maya is the main protagonist in the novel *Cry, the Peacock*, and Desai explores how nature and women are getting degraded by the human society. Maya, a young sensitive newly married girl, who is haunted by a childhood prophecy of a fatal disaster. She is the daughter of a rich advocate in Lucknow. Maya a motherless child, being alone in her family and her only brother gone to U.S for his studies. She obtains her father's affection and attention more and more and always she feels that the world is the heaven because of extreme care and warmth by her father. After Maya's marriage, she expects the same love and affection from her husband Gauthama, but she fails to get it. Gauthama, a middle aged lawyer, always thinks logically in all aspects of life. Gauthama, a busy prosperous lawyer, too much engrossed in his own vocational affairs and fails to meet her wife's wishes. Maya exclaims to herself, no, one, no one else, loves me as my father does" and also nature imageries in *Cry, the Peacock*, explores the emotional world of Maya and travel down her psychology to unravel her distorted world. And the images are exact expressions of an extremely sensitive personality that borders between neurosis and insanity. The first Zoological imagery of Toto, Maya's pet dog is used, "as a structural device that is not only integral to the novelist but also to the theme" (Prasad 363). This animal image reflects Maya's love for sensitive animals and her psychic turmoil. 'All the day the body by rotting in the sun . It could not be moved on the veranda for, in that april heat, the reek of dead flesh was over powering and would soon have penetrated the rooms. Crows sat in a circle around the corpse, and crows will eat anything- entrails, eyes, anything' (7). Maya distressed about her pet dog's death, she fails to realize that death is a natural phenomena that one has to accept. Later she claims childless women do develop fanatic attachments to their pets.... (*Cry* 15). She is a

victim of loneliness and alienation. In this incident Maya's husband Gauthama instead of calming her, he behaves rudely. Maya pours her agony to Gauthama, 'oh, Gautama pets might not mean anything to you, and yet they mean the world to me' (CP 19). Gauthama irritated and he says, 'you go chattering like a monkey and I am annoyed that I have been interrupted in my thinking' (CP 20) Gauthama's opinion towards nature and women was always lesser and negative. In another incident, when maya finds a pigeon's nest with baby's, she exclaims that 'when the pigeon's nest in the verenda of her home is filled with babies, and the doves coo to mate, maya is reminded of her loveless life and her childless condition. Her unfortunate plight is aggravated when she sees rat, she sats rats will suckle their young most tenderly, I know this as now I lived quite near one, with seven young ones nestling between their legs' (107). But Gauthama is unresponsive to her desperate calls for intimacy. He was a realistic and cold so that he never tries to understand her feelings Maya, a motherless child gets all the shower of love from her father. She has been brought up as a princess." She says that "as a child, i enjoyed, princess life, a sumptuous fare of the fantasies of the Arabian nights, the glories and bravado of Indian mythology, long astounding tales of the Princess and royal queens (41). Maya brought up like a princess in her father's home and she is sensitive to the beauty around her, the flowers the fruits, the sky and her pets and trees and in short the whole nature. But Gauthama is totally contrast to her, and he is insensitive to the beauty of nature and behaves always logically and rationally in every aspects of life.

In another situation, Maya observed peacocks cries in the rainy season. She identifies herself with the peacocks that keep 'pacing the rocks at night peacocks searching for males , peacocks tearing themselves to bleeding shreds in the act of love , peacocks screaming with –agony at the death on love' (146). Maya proclaims about herself, that I was caged in his room that I had hate – severe , without even the grace of symmetry(86) she realizes that she could never sleep in peace. She asks herself as " Am I gone insane ? who is my saviour ? Father ! Brother! Husband ! who is my saviour? I am in a need of one. I am dying , and I am in love ,and I am dying. God let me sleep , forget rest. But no, I will never sleep again. There is no rest any more only death and waiting" Maya suffers from headaches and experiences rages of rebellion and terror. As she turns towards insanity she sees different visions and stays completely in a horrible and fearful Zone. All these disturbances and chaos in her mind suffocating her too deep to restore. In all her frustrations and turmoils one day Maya kills her husband and also kills herself.

Ecofeminism is a practical movement that began in 1997, as a new discourse for social change emerging from the struggles of women to sustain in the patriarchal society and environmental degradation. Men's extreme control over women and indiscriminative exploitation of nature by the humans have brought a significant problems there by resulting in natural devastations and rise of voice for empowerment of the women.

Anitha Desai explores that Maya is the accurate representation of nature. Nature is creative and destructive, protective and also dangerous. Human beings are the responsible for nature protection and conservation. To fulfill and satisfy our selfish desires we are exploiting nature and its cycle. From the perception of ecofeminism, women and nature are used as symbols and they are exploited and consumed by males and humans in the name of progress and development. They disturb the nature and its elements that invites the rains of humans and ultimately in cry, the peacock as Gauthama failed to impart the visible love and care to maya that ruined the life of both Maya and Gauthama. Through the novel cry, the peacock Desai tries to reveal the truth's about nature and women which are symbolic representations of creation. And Desai claims that all human beings should respect nature as well as women and must possess their cordial concerns to both of them.

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Chapter – 24

UNIQUE PRESENTATION OF FEMALE CHARACTERS OF KIRAN DESAI'S SELECT NOVELS

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Abstract

This paper emphasizes the struggle and the journey of women characters from slavery to liberty in the novels *Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*, 1998 and *'The Inheritance of loss'* got Man Booker prize, 2006. Women writers fight for the rights of the females. Kiran Desai became one of the worldwide famous female writers because she is dealing with multidimensional concerns like alienation, identity crisis, globalization, insurgency, post colonialism and multiculturalism. She portrayed the three generations to show pursuit of female for identity. Nimi, a female character in *The Inheritance of Loss*, is defeated and oppressed but other character like Sai, privileged by Kiran's authoritative character. She is a legitimate female character who can depict the picture of a magnificent female character. Particularly if we generalize all Desai's woman characters, they exhibit women's search for liberty and rights. Woman's life journey starts from suppression to liberation is wonderfully presented with multitudinous shades. Present generation women play many roles and struggled always to balance them. They want to live for others sake but not to lead a lively existence. They sacrifice every moment of their life for their family. Desai's second novel *The Inheritance of Loss* is the depiction of the oppression in every aspect of their lives which transfer from generation to generation. Discrimination and bias against gender, age, sensual orientation, economic status and marital status should be taken away from the roots to lead a stress free existence. Every person has his own point of views regarding gender bias. Female writer's quest for identity and equality is seen in every character either directly or indirectly.

Keywords: suppression, depiction, discrimination, colonialism, sensual orientation.

INTRODUCTION

Kiran Desai, the prestigious Man Booker Prize winner, one of the famous female writers in the world. In her novel 'The Inheritance of loss' she dealt with many issues like women's quest for identity and freedom. Woman writers have their own style of presentation of woman characters but Kiran Desai's woman characters are unique in their presentation. She created women characters with little sensitiveness and humbleness with some zestful flickers.

In her novels 'The Inheritance of loss' and 'Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard', female characters are portrayed as successful in holding their position in a male dominated society. Desai shows the struggle of woman characters in the male domination society. However, she has proved that the women of India fight for their rights and liberty in order to lead a peaceful life. Feminism implies the women's demand for equality, equality for power, right and opportunity. Opportunities for these have gifted men by birth but females have to struggle to obtain. And it is not necessary that they must succeed but sometime they may fail. But failure does not mean to quit but stands unpredictable to face obstacles in own way with new energy, guts and confidence. To achieve this confidence and equality women are stepping out of the right sex roles allotted to them historically.

Desai has portrayed a number of female characters with various tinctures that shows the successive generations of women. Kiran Desai in both of her novels has presented basically two types of women; one described as illiterate class, rustic and traditional and the second educated and urban ladies. Detailed elucidation will throw requisite light on Desai's shadowing regarding women. Sai's grandmother Nimi belongs to first generation, Lola, Noni, Mrs. Sen and Sai's mother included in women of second generation and Sai herself comprises the woman of third generation in the novel IOL. On the other hand, in the novel HGO Pinki's grandmother is an example of first generation woman, Kulfi shows second generation woman and last but not least Pinki herself shows the third generation woman like Sai. Nimi in IOL and Pinki's grandmother in HGO represent first category and Noni, Lola, Sai and Kulfi shows second. The women of first category are shown as subjugated by the patriarchal setup whereas second demonstrates life of freedom, liberation and meaning.

Desai has enfolded three generations to depict the odyssey of women from subjugation to liberation. Desai has described each female character very skillfully with a specific nature. Desai has described very skillfully that seeking promising career people migrate to Europe, USA, England, London etc. but under the effect of multiculturalism they start to lose their own identity and culture, and example of such type of character is Jemubhai Popatlal Patel a retired judge who suffers lots in England, oppressed and humiliated there but he always tries to hide his embarrassment behind a façade of "Keeping up Standards" (Kiran Desai, 2006, pp.119). While the fact reveals that only

for financial support to go abroad he marries Bela Patel. To incur a luxurious dowry their marriage was a negotiation.

Through the character of Bela Desai exemplifies the reality of female subjugation. The judge is attracted and fascinated with his young under aged wife in the beginning. "While the family was out selling the jewels for extra money, he offered her a ride on his father's Hercules cycle.....they went faster and faster, between the trees and cows, whizzing through the cow pats. Jemubhai turned, caught quick sight of her eyes-oh, no man had eyes like these or looked out on the world this way....their hearts were left behind for an instant, levitating amid green leaves, blue sky" (102). Bela is only fourteen years old when she marries to Jemubhai Popatlal Patel and so terrified that she pleads to be spared the wedding night. So with the creation of this female character Bela, writer tries to highlight the Indian tradition of early marriage.

Child marriage is very common in India and like a business deal with the bride's family responsible for the dowries must bring to her groom's family. On the day the couple marries, bride's name is changed and renamed as 'Nimi' from her birth name Bela within a minutes. Desai again shows the suppression of woman life in which they are not allowed to maintain their identity and dignity, they have no rights of their own existence, even their name can be changed if their husband wants. So renaming of a female foreshadows her own marginalization.

Jemubhai leaves for England for five years to become an ICS officer and leaves her wife Nimi behind and with the progress of time he forgets her. When he came back to his village he welcomed by the villagers, after all he was the first man in his community to win such an honor. He follows the English ways which he learned in England. He powdered his face in order to look lighter skinned. Once Nimi is fascinated by his powder puff and she hides it. When Jemubhai discovers this he becomes infuriated. He beats her beastly and in rage he violently rapes her and spends all his frustration on her. Instead disapproving, his family members proceed to lock them in. He wants to teach her the same dishonor and bitter feelings of isolation and shame he had learned himself.

Jemu's treatment of his wife deteriorates as time continues. He believes that English speaking people are the symbol of the sophisticated class. He does not love his wife only because she is unable to speak English. Nimi is shown as a traditional wife for whom husband is everything. But husband does not feel any hesitation to torture his wife. He could not control himself when he sees the silly behavior of Nimi and bursts on her without little care about her feeling. His misbehaviors become intolerable to her but she does not speak a single word in revolt till her last patience. Jemubhai hates all persons who as Indians as they are not taken as civilized. His hate, fear, misbehaviors, and ill treatment of his wife are the outcome of disintegration of the self under the effect of colonialism. Nimi's life was full of oppression, injustice, deprivation, isolation and alienation; she is completely tied with these. She can't escape far away.

Nimi's character is shown with the lens of recollection of her anglophile husband. Another incident which shows the injustice of an Indian wife is that when Jemubhai discovers her footprints on toilet sheet, he lost his temper and his frustration knows no limit: "she was squatting on it!- he could barely contain his outrage took her head and pushed it into the toilet bowl" (173). He reduces a beautiful young woman to a pitiful caricature of herself with his every cruel misbehaves. Her toiletry and beauty items are discarded and prohibited her to wear traditional Indian jewelry because it does suit his English tastes. As a result of his physical torture and emotional abuse she withdraws into herself. Time goes on and she spoke to none, the servants throw their own leftovers on the table for Nimi to eat, stole anything without fear. Due to the mental stress she develops pustules on her face, which further irritates her husband. She comes to realize the emptiness of her existence. "The quieter she was, the louder he shouted, and if she protested, it was worse. She soon realized that whatever she did or didn't do, the outcome was much the same" (312).

Nimi is being insulted and treated like animal by her husband. He creates the fuss on the trivial issues only because of his separation from his own culture. He was happy in his personal life without any interference of other even her wife who give a strong financial support by dowry to make his career. When Nimi went to a meeting of Nehru and coincidently recognized by Jemubhai's boss, he feels very insulted and could not digest it. By this incident he thought his all ways of the promotion will be closed. Having been acquainted with his wife he would think awkward. As a result of this he kicks and thrashes her blue and black. To get rid of her he could not help him thinking to care about her: "In purest moment he could imagine himself killing her" (305). Finally she is sent to Gujarat, her paternal home and there she takes the shelter in her uncle's house but there also she is not permitted to live more and his uncle tells her openly: "you are your husband's responsibility. Go back. Your father gave a dowry when you married- you got your share and it is not for daughters to come claiming anything thereafter. If you made your husband angry, go ask for forgiveness"(306). By this particular incident Desai shows very skillfully, how after the marriage a woman has no right to live in her parent's house and is learned to face every situation whether good or bad. Nimi suffers double loss, loss of her sanity and saneness and loss of her human self in the hand of cruel patriarchal system. So her life has been full of predicaments and challenged. Later in the text shows that Jemubhai paid bribes to have Nimi's carnage look like an accident. When the news he heard that Nimi had caught fire over a stove, the judge chose to believe it was an accident. After all, "ashes have no wait, they tell no secrets, they rise too lightly for guilt...." (338). Sometimes they are not treated as human and their voices are not heard. Here Nimi is a very silent woman and silence is a symbol of oppression, and speech signifies self expression and liberation.

The character of Sai can be compared with the Ida, a female character in Manju Kapur's *Difficult Daughters*. She also struggles but unlike Sai surrender herself before social norms. Death was the last solution and the only relief to Nimi whom the patriarchal society crushed all her life. Second important character is Sai, whose journey is really existential unlike Nimi. With the help of this character Desai, also described the condition of an orphan. Sai is frank, independent, bold and educated character who inspires weak child to face all challenges with guts and verve.

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Chapter-25

Ecofeminism

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Introduction:-

To liberate both nature and women from exploitation this word was introduced. It is an interplay between the domination of nature and the oppression of women. For over four decades the word ecofeminism attracted scholars and activists from a range of disciplines. This branch doesn't deal merely criticism but also helps to identify emancipation ideals that can be realized in the world . this issue has staggering impact from Asia to Europe and Africa to America. This section covers core issues and topics that intertwine with ecofeminism to offer innovative approaches to interpreting literature. Well established fields like animal studies and cultural studies are juxtaposed with contributions on foundational topics like hegemonic masculinity and material ecocriticism.

Ecofeminism to literary criticism through surveys of key periods and genres from gothic to Victorian litertaures reveals the relationship between women and nature across time.

Hegemonic Masculinity

Hegemony is a concept that refers to the covert means in which the masses consent to the power relationship within society, the leaders that dominate and cultural norms regarding power. This consent is rooted in the social structure that normalizes oppression as routine or as normative cultural norms make up how life is lived through daily practices. These daily practices are typically supported and manipulated by those who control the means by which a society produces, distributes and consumes. This is a cultural hegemony. Hegemonic masculinity is an extension of cultural hegemony that brings attention to the ways that masculinity is embedded within the culture normalizing masculine based domination. The domination of nature and the domination of women have a shared history with hegemonic masculinity. The dominant literary products that are quickly and easily disseminated normalize hegemonic masculinity. While much of the early ecofeminism literature did not use the term hegemonic masculinity, the core elements are embedded within ecofeminist thought. Ecofeminism is a branch of feminism and political ecology. The thinkers brought this concept of gender to analyse the relationships between humans and natural world. Ecofeminist theory asserts a feminist perspective of green politics that calls for an egalitarian, collaborative society in which there is no one dominant group. Today there are several branches of ecofeminism with varying approaches and analyses, including liberal ecofeminism, cultural ecofeminism and materialistic ecofeminism. Many ecofeminist scholars have made the distinction that it is not because women are female or feminine that they relate to nature but because of their similar states of oppression by the same male-dominant forces. The marginalization is evident in the gendered language used to describe nature such as Mother Earth or Mother Nature and the animalized language used to describe women in derogatory terms. Some discourses link women specifically to the environment because of these traditional social roles as a nurturer and care giver.

Modern science and Ecofeminism:

Some ecofeminists think over modern science and its acceptance as a universal and value free system. They thought modern sciences as projection of western men's values. This scientific knowledge has been controlled by men and restricted to men. A common claim with in ecofeminism literature is that patriarchal structures justify their dominance through binary opposition, these include but are not limited to male/female, heaven/earth, mind/body. Oppression, according to them is reinforced by assuming truth in these binaries, which factually they challenge, and instil them as 'marvelous to behold' through what they consider to be religious and scientific constructs.

Vegetarian Ecofeminism :-

Diverse branches emerged after the coinage of Eco-feminism. Many ecofeminists believe that "meat eating is a form of patriarchal domination"... that suggests link between male violence and meat based diet. So the application of ecofeminism to animal rights has established vegetarian ecofeminism. Some luminaries construed that "Manhood is constructed in our culture in part by access to meat eating and control of other bodies, whether it is women or animals. According to some luminaries "we cannot work for justice and challenge the oppression of nature without understanding that the most frequent way we interact with nature is by eating animals"

Spiritual Ecofeminism/Cultural Ecofeminism

Spiritual ecofeminism is not linked to one specific religion but is centered around values of caring compassion and non violence. Often ecofeminists refer to more ancient traditions such as the worship of the Goddess of Nature. These issues demonstrate a deep respect for nature, a feminine outlook. According to some ecofeminists cultural ecofeminism "celebrates the relationship between women and nature through the revival of ancient rituals centered on Goddess worship. In this sense,

cultural ecofeminists tend to value intuition, an ethic of caring and human nature interrelationships.

Movements 1970 and 80s

In India, in the state of Uttara Khand in 1973, women took part in Chipko Movement to protect forests from deforestation. Non – violent protest tactics were used to occupy trees so that loggers could not cut them down.

In Kenya in 1978 Green Belt movement was initiated by environmental and political activist professor Wanger Mathai. It is a rural planting programme led by women which Mathai designed to help prevent desertification in the area. The program created a ‘Green Belt’ of at least 1000 trees around villages. The work of the Green Belt movement continues even today also.

In 1980 and 1981, women like ecofeminist Ynestra King organized a peaceful protest at Pentagon. Women stood hand in hand, demanding equal rights as well as an end to militaristic actions taken by the Government and exploitation of the community. This movement is known as the women’s Pentagon actions.

The Greening Harlem coalition is another example of an ecofeminist movement. In 1989 Bernadette Cozart founded the coalition, which is responsible for many Urban Gardens around Harlem. Cozart’s goal is to turn vacant lots into community gardens. The majority of people interested in this project were women. In 1994, a group of African-American women in Detroit have developed city Gardens, and call themselves the Gardening angels.

Ecofeminism and Environment :

Women-led environmental activism in India can be traced back to the Chipko Movement in the 1970s important for its mobilization of rural women, the Chipko

movement was one of the first acts of environmental activism that vocalized concerns against the state's indulgence in excess capitalism.

A protest against the deforestation of acres that led to devastating floods and landslides, it has become an exemplary event of grass root environmentalism. In the recent years voices like Medha Patkar, C.K. Janu, Mahasweta Devi and Arundhati Roy have played very important roles in several ecofeminist movements throughout the country.

Ecofeminism connects the domination and oppression of women with the rampant exploitation of nature through masculine methods and attitudes. Environmental activist and author Vandana Shiva states that while gender subordination and patriarchy are the oldest of oppressions, they have taken on new and more violent forms through the project of development. According to her, the feminine principle of Prakriti is a tool to counter the model of Western development, which she describes as maldevelopment a movement like Narmada Bachao Andolan is an example of enabling voices of Tribal Adivasi Women.

Till today the hierarchical basis of our society breeds oppression. The dualistic thinking that neatly divides the world into the dominant and the subordinate justifies the exploitation of both women and nature. In the patriarchal narrative both women and nature are objectified existing for masculinity to establish dominance and extract value as defined by the patriarchal hegemony. Because of gender division of labour and the humongous amount of unpaid work that is performed by women all over the world. Environmental degradation often hits them first and harder than men. Ecofeminism recognizes the interconnectedness and seeks to establish a framework that looks at feminism and ecological concerns in tandem.

Ecofeminism says that women are closer to nature than men are. This closeness, therefore make women more caring and nurturing towards their environment. Some indicate the biology of women as the reason behind the closeness, while others credit culture and historical factors.

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Chapter-26

A Study of Ecofeminism in the Novel Mistress of Spices

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Ecofeminism, also called ecological feminism is a branch of feminism that examines the interrelation between women and nature. Ecofeminism was designed by French feminist Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974. According to Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary," Ecofeminism is described as a philosophical and political theory and movement which combines ecological concerns with feminist ones, regarding both as resulting from male domination of society."

Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an accomplished Indian American author, poet and professor who combines in her works diaspora, feminism and ecofeminism. One of the works that strongly depicts ecofeminism in her books is *The Mistress of Spices*. This book has been made into a film and was also shortlisted for Orange prize. In *Mistress of Spices*, Tilo, a specialist in the secret power of spices, dedicates her life to helping those in need within the South Asian community in California. Tilo the mistress of spices is the protagonist of the novel and is trained by the First Mother amongst the nature to use spices as healing power. She was named NAYAN TARA –at birth, the star of the eye, star seer, and also the flower that grows by the dust road. As the cows run dry at the time of her birth she was fed with the milk of ass which helped her in getting the sight and words sooner than others. The author brings her closer to nature and entangles her entire life with different elements of nature from her birth. She was a special child as she had magical powers and used them for the villagers and in return got luxuries of life for her and her family. Out of boredom, discontentment and monotony she sent a calling thought with a gold hook over the waters by which pirates came in search of her and took her away, killing her parents and destroying the village with fire. She lives her life with the pirates bringing life and death as the queen of pirates. Her life gets more intertwined with the powers given by nature. As a pirate queen she reviews her life and

wants to know her longing and sends a calling thought over the water again. As a result a typhoon comes in the water and she gets released and saved by the serpents under water. Water and fire become an important part of her life that changes her life from a village belle to a pirate queen and now takes her to an unknown world of spices and magic led by the serpents, she jumps into the water and in the morning she found herself naked on the shore. She is chosen by the First Mother as the spice girl and under the guidance of the First Mother she renames herself as TILOTTAMA - It means Life giver, restorer of health and hope. Tilo is the sesame seed of which the flower is so small and straight that mothers pray for their children to have a nose shaped like it. It is golden brown in colour under the sway of planet Venus. Til (Indian name for sesame) when ground into paste with sandalwood cures diseases of heart and liver. When fried in its own oil restores luster when one has lost interest in their life. Tilottama is the most beautiful Apsara in the court of God Indira. She is the most elegant of all dancers. She was crest jewelled among women. Along with her other friends Aparajita - a flower whose juice when smeared on eyelids leads one to victory and Pia - the tree whose ashes rubbed on limbs brings vigour, Tilo passed the ceremony of purification i.e., entering the Shampati's fire. Tilo loves spices, knows their origins, what their colours signify, their smells and even their true names. Their heat runs in her blood. All spices bow to her command, yield their properties and magic powers. Every Indian spice was found in her store and when placed in her hand they speak to her and even direct her at necessary times. SPICE BAZAAR was the name of her shop fitted at the corner. Each chapter of this novel is named after a spice which reveals their powers and their origins. The author spins an astounding story of spices with a mix of nature, where nature becomes an important part of setting and a character itself. The First mother lives in the island where Tilo lands and spends her time among the serene yet mystical island to learn from the old one. The story around spices and the nature- a world full of mystery, set in the dark luster of an island surrounded by water seems real and scary. From this land of nature Tilo is transported through fire of Sampati- (the Eastern phoenix) to Oakland. Chitra Banerjee uses the elements of nature to transcend the world of nature. "Seamist, the island cast its pearl light around us." Later describing the island she says, "The sky is black and smoky. There is no sky, and no sea either." Each chapter of the novel is named after a spice, which is an eternal part of nature. The author uses similes, metaphors and adjectives from the nature to bring depth to her narrations and descriptions. She describes the other spice girls as "they become water wraiths, spirits of mist and salt, crying in the voice of the gulls".(34) While the mistresses are leaving the island "We had known it would be hard to leave this island of women where on our

skin the warm rain fell like pomegranate seeds, where we woke to bird call and slept to the First Mother's singing, where we swam naked without shame in lakes of blue lotus". Describing the Spice bazaar at Oakland and the skin color of Tilo she uses the term mud coloured instead of saying brown. While describing sweets she uses similes like Emerald green burfis, rasgulla white as dawn, and, made from lentil flour, laddus like nuggets of gold. Divakaruni steers her sentences adeptly with antithesis using nature in her novels. "Raven, tonight lay on my windowsill amritanjan, ointment that is like cold fire, hot ice." Divakaruni has personified few sentences elegantly like, But today the light is pink-tinted like just –bloomed karabi flowers". The protagonist initially known as Nayan Tara used to play in heat-cracked fields behind her father's house and when she used to be sweaty the land snakes used to shield her from sun Later when she became a pirate she was called Bhagyavati, at that time her life was saved by the snakes and they used to tell her stories of Nagraj. They were her friends; they used to whisper to her. Later when she became the mistress of spices and was named as Tilotamma she used to feel their presence in her spice store. The use of five elements-the air, water, earth, space and fire the essential parts of nature are interwoven into the story dexterously. The fire of Sampati, the water through which Bhagawati, Nayantara sends messages, the names of mistresses and even the figures of speech used in the novel are eternal parts of nature. Towards the end of the novel a devastating earthquake that symbolizes the Indian philosophy of creation, preservation and destruction completes the cycle but bonds Raven the male protagonist of the novel to Maya, the name given to Tilo by Raven and shows the violent side of nature. Together Tilo and Raven look for the earthly paradise, a dream world symbolizing a utopian existence. "High up in the mountains, pine and eucalyptus, damp odour of redwood, bark and cone" However they realize that a new world can be created from the ruins of the devastated world: "Because there is no earthly paradise. Except what we can make back there, in the soot in the rubble in the crisped-away flesh. In the guns and needles, the white drug-dust, the young men and women lying down to dreams of wealth and power and waking in cells. Yes, in the hate in the fear" .This way the cycle of nature also comes to an end from beginning with Nayantara's creation as a foreseer and further is preserved and reinstated as she goes on to be initiated as the spice girl by the First mother and towards the end all the powers given are taken back destroyed as she breaks the rules of getting emotionally attached with someone and even rebels to take shape as a beautiful lady. The earthquake destroys everything but not her faith to create again from the rubbles. In destruction also life sprouts again. Chitra Banerjee's works are studied and analysed more often for the

elements of feminism and diaspora and Ecofeminism in her work. Divakaruni has used ecofeminism adeptly that makes her narrative interesting,gives depth to her writing and beauty to her stylistic features.

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“This book gives diverse ways of understanding and responding to the tangled relationship between the personal, social and environmental dimensions of Human experience and expression.”

Dr.Mary Suvarna Latha, Principal, BSSB Degree College, Tadikonda

“I sincerely hope that the assorted methods of innovation adopted in this book will enlighten the family of English Literature and motivate for further Research on EcoFeminism.”

Dr.P.N.V.D. Mahesh, HOD of Dept. of English, SS&N Degree College, Narasaraopeta

