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The journal welcomes publications of quality papers on research in humanities, arts, science. agriculture, anthropology, education, geography, advertising, botany, business studies, chemistry, commerce, computer science, communication studies, criminology, cross cultural studies, demography, development studies, geography, library science, methodology, management studies, earth sciences, economics, bioscience, entrepreneurship, fisheries, history, information science & technology, law, life sciences, logistics and performing arts (music, theatre & dance), religious studies, visual arts, women studies, physics, fine art, microbiology, physical education, public administration, philosophy, political sciences, psychology, population studies, social science, sociology, social welfare, linguistics, literature and so on.

Research should be at the core and must be instrumental in generating a major interface with the academic world. It must provide a new theoretical frame work that enable reassessment and refinement of current practices and thinking. This may result in a fundamental discovery and an extension of the knowledge acquired. Research is meant to establish or confirm facts, reaffirm the results of previous works, solve new or existing problems, support theorems; or develop new theorems. It empowers the faculty and students for an in-depth approach in research. It has the potential to enhance the consultancy capabilities of the researcher. In short, conceptually and thematically an active attempt to provide these types of common platforms on educational reformations through research has become the main objective of this Journal.

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### **RECTOR'S MESSAGE**

“Being is inter-being” asserts Thich Nhat Hanh, the Buddhist monk and peace activist. It is a radical redefinition of the prevalent preoccupation with being-in-itself. Common is the monadic paradigm that privileges individuality. The formulation is fundamental revision of the way most people view themselves, others and the world. That it is relationality which constitutes beings is a more recent philosophical emphasis. Interconnectedness and interdependence are concepts that have gained currency.

Against this backdrop, the ONE-DAY NATIONAL CONFERENCE on ‘Synergising Sustainability Continuum: Multidisciplinary Explorations in Eco-Literary Praxis’ is topical. It promises exciting presentations from multiple perspectives and different disciplines.

The organizers have boldly ventured into this challenging field. What impels them is their concern and care for earth.

The conference will, I am sure, pave the way for oikos – a ‘household’ comprising humans, animals, plants, earth and stars, nay all the elements that constitute the cosmos.

My wishes and vibrations are for a conference experience of inspiration, of fellowship and of connectedness to all things.





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### **PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE**

Hearty Congratulations!

The greatest challenge that the mankind faces today is to protect and preserve the nature and environment. The development paradigms that have been envisioned for the progress of man has largely contributed to the devastation of nature. The primordial love and reverence for nature has been the first casualty at the altar of “development”. Today, more than ever, there is a strong need to reconnect with our roots, rejoice in the beauty and glory of nature and revive the sacred grooves of our indigenous earth-centred values. Beyond doubt, language and literature have a vital role to play in this effort towards sustenance. In this context, the conference on ‘Synergising Sustainability Continuum: Multidisciplinary Explorations in Eco-Literary Praxis’, organized by the Department of English, Loyola College, is welcome. I congratulate the faculty of the Department of English for taking this major step of organizing the National Conference. Let us celebrate this literary voyage into the depth of our ecology and discover ways of sustaining our natural environments making our habitat peaceful and life-friendly!

All the best





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**Dr. Louis Joseph Chandra**

Professor & Head of the Department

I am indeed delighted as an Academic to be involved in the conduct of a National Conference on "SYNERGIZING SUSTAINABILITY CONTINUUM: MULTIDISCIPLINARY EXPLORATIONS IN ECO-LITERARY PRAXIS" by the Department of English, Loyola College. I appreciate my colleague Dr. Mary Vidya Porselvi for taking the initiative to organize this grand intellectual event. She is a reputed scholar who has published lot of research papers in this field of study. Global Warming and Climate Change are no more esoteric terms used by Environmentalists but have become part of our common public discourse. Literature is the only subject that deals with all matters pertaining to human life and in an age of mindless environmental destruction for the sake of economic development no issue can be more critical than ecological concerns.

It is a fact that in the 21st century Literature and the act of studying literature cannot be apolitical. Eco-literature and Eco-criticism have a symbiotic relationship to each other. Reading literature from an Eco-critical perspective is a highly enjoyable and enriching experience. Eco-literature challenges us to move towards a biocentric world-view as opposed to an anthropocentric view and calls for a broadening of humankind's conception of a global community to include non-human life forms and the physical environment. Such distinct 'greening' of literature energizes our engagements with the world of nature and widens our circle of compassion to all living creatures. The philosopher Emmanuel Leavings' "the Face-of -the-Other" thus becomes not just a matter of ethical commitment but also stresses on "Extended Compassion" on our part.

The brilliant depiction of pollution and the loss of habitat in the novels of Don De Lillo and Amitav Ghosh present a mountain of ecological anxieties. Environmental Literature problematizes the absence of land health and the despoiling of natural habitats. The dominant metaphor of our Digital Age in Eco-literature is not the Smartphone but 'waste' that includes e-waste, garbage, dumpsites, debris and hazardous nuclear waste. Such distinct 'greening' of

literature energizes our engagements with the world of Nature. Green Cultural Studies has altered our perception of literary studies today. The English Department of Loyola College has Eco-poetics and Green Cultural Studies as part of its PG curriculum for over a decade.

A 'green reading' of Eco-literary texts highlights the importance of sustaining a healthy web of life on Earth and creates a sensitivity to ecological issues and also heightens our environmental consciousness. In Loyola College campus, "KEEP LOYOLA CLEAN AND GREEN" is not a mere slogan to be parroting around but a sacred praxis.





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**Dr. S. Vincent**  
Dean of Research



I am happy and pleased to note that the Department of English is organizing a One-Day National Conference on "Synergising Sustainability Continuum: Multidisciplinary Explorations in Eco-Literary Praxis" to be held on December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017. As I understand 'sustainability' is the understanding of ecological communities and various principles of the ecosystem. It is a way of thinking about the world in terms of its interdependent natural and human systems, including a consideration of the consequences of human actions and interactions within the natural context.

I am sure this conference will help to open avenues for exchange of ideas in this important field of Eco-Literary Studies. The prospects of participation of eminent resource persons from prestigious academic institutions from our Nation and their interaction with the young student community are gratifying and it reflects the significance and its relevance to improving the standard of living of the human society.

I congratulate the organizers for their efforts in conducting this conference in a grand manner.

I wish the conference every success.

(Dr. S. Vincent)

"Let Your Light Shine"



**Dr. Thilagavathi G Joseph**  
*Associate Professor of English (Rtd.)*



In a world dominated by dichotomies, even after Derrida's decentring, the nature-culture divide seems to be in need of the highest attention, the most concerted global effort, for the earth to remain habitable.

When humans plunder the Mother Earth, and indirectly the mother, the woman, the nurturer, we experience nature's fury in multiple forms. The Vardha is the most recent and shocking example of how nature could destroy itself with a vengeance, when in a matter of few hours the green cover just collapsed as we helplessly watched. The coexistence of nature and culture is the essence of life and this phenomenon is facing threat from humans who are the primary consumers and controllers of the ecosystem. We are aware of the intensity of the threat when we read about the dead shark washed ashore with waste plastic weighing about 50 kgs in the guts, and about the capital city struggling to breathe, winning the honour of being the most polluted city in the world. The situation is critical and the need to act individually and collectively is urgent. The academia has the greatest responsibility as it holds sway over the youth power which can positively upturn the entire system.

The Department of English, Loyola College, in realisation of the urgency of the need to synergise sustainability, through exploration of literary texts, which besides providing answers and solutions can provoke people to think and act, has organized this conference. I congratulate the organizers of this conference, especially Dr. P. Mary Vidya Porselvi, whom I had the pleasure of guiding in her research, for carrying forward her research with the passion to disseminate knowledge and for spearheading the academic initiative to delve deeper into literary and critical texts to find new perspectives on the Eco-literary praxis.





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**Dr. Nirmal Selvamony**  
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**SPEAKER'S MESSAGE**

Though the sciences study various aspects of ecology, only the humanities delve into ecological issues deep enough. From the 1970s, the assumptions underlying the relationship between the human and the non-human world have been examined closely by philosophers and literary theorists. But such examination has not been followed up by necessary ecocentric policy changes and political action. Yet our deliberations on the interrelation between humans and non-human world cannot cease. Such a conviction is the driving force behind the one-day national conference on “Synergizing Sustainability Continuum: Multidisciplinary Explorations in Eco-literary Praxis” (organized by Loyola College, Chennai, on 8 December, 2017) at a critical moment of the Anthropocene.

A significant timely move indeed!



## EDITORIAL NOTE

*“In reality, there is a single integral community of the Earth that includes all its component members whether human or other than human. In this community every being has its own role to fulfill, its own dignity, its own inner spontaneity. Every being has its own voice. Every being declares itself to the entire universe...In every phase of our imaginative, aesthetic, and emotional lives we are profoundly dependent on this larger context of the surrounding world.” - Thomas Berry*

Eco criticism has evolved into a multidisciplinary field of study in the past three decades beginning with the definition of Cheryll Glotfelty in her path-breaking anthology *The Eco criticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* in 1996, “eco criticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective... eco criticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies” (xviii). The word “sustain” comes from the Latin root word *sustinere* meaning “to endure”. Sustainability is a vision and a mission for every living being on this Earth. In an age of insensitivity and apathy, revisiting earth-centred values inspires a constant search towards a more benevolent universe. In an age of misuse and abuse, redefining the needs and rights of the voiceless remain the pertinent responsibility of every conscious individual, group, community or society at large.

The central goal of this ecological venture is to synergise, to bring together a bouquet of compatible ideals and practices that contribute towards the sustainability of Mother Earth. The aim of this conference is to throw light on the multidisciplinary foci of thought with concerns of sustainability in literature, language and environment. The major objectives of the conference are: to recognise the scope of interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary research in ecology and discourse; to identify multidisciplinary approaches, methods, strategies and frameworks in eco-literature and eco linguistics studies; to provide a platform to express indigenous, earth-centred values, beliefs and ideologies that care for Mother Earth; to explore ideologies and practices that reinforce simple and sustainable living; to integrate the ecological wisdom of communities across cultures, societies and religions in our country and world at large.

The word “praxis” is a noun that indicates action. Interestingly, right from the creation of our planet Earth the term “word” for human beings has always denoted action. According to Paulo Freire, the Brazilian educationist, “within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed—even in part—the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world” (*Pedagogy of the Oppressed* 87).

Continuum signifies a wide gamut of thoughts and expressions. It is a broad canopy that brings together an extensive range of sustainable approaches, themes and concerns represented in literature and art of diverse communities, networks and movements across the world. Eco criticism endorses the age-old beliefs of interconnectedness, interdependence and intrinsic value of life. In his article 'A Deeper Appreciation of Nature', Satish Kumar, the author of 'Soil, Soul, Society' explains, "Shallow ecology considers Nature conservation important, but only because Nature is useful to humans. It's an anthropocentric worldview...For the advocates of deep ecology, Nature has intrinsic value. Nature is not a resource for the economy. Nature is the source of life itself... Reverential ecology says yes to all that, but it adds an extra dimension: it considers Nature to be sacred. Life is sacred. Humans need to cultivate a sense of gratitude to Nature" (*Resurgence and The Ecologist* Nov/Dec 2017).

In this Ecozoic era, the future of existence and the path towards sustainability can be envisioned only with the very human agents whose "visionary" imaginations and "mindful" actions had profoundly transformed and still continue to revere, empower and transform each and every element of the planet Earth and the universe at large. At this pivotal moment of ecological conversion, the academicians as thinking individuals have a greater responsibility to integrate the multifarious voices that care for the well-being of our planet. Eco-literary praxis believes in conscious reflection converted into action and conversely, reflective action transformed into constructive thought. An eco-sensitive thinker deftly weaves, interweaves and reweaves the warp and the weft of words, motifs and patterns to create authentic expressions of art, craft and literature. Words are the wonder beads strung together meticulously by the adept artisan to acknowledge, to celebrate and to revere the inherent worth of life on this Earth. And with those genuine expressions, the indefatigable eco-champions painstakingly wield their magical wand to recreate the world for the better. By transcending the polemics of theory and practice, this green initiative provides a viable space for recognising the eco-critical voices and concerns to be translated into action in the days to come.

*Special Issue's Editors*  
**Dr. D. JOSEPH CHANDRA**  
**Dr. V. DAVID JEYABALAN &**  
**Dr. P. MARY VIDYA PORSELVI**



## ABOUT EDITORS



**Dr. D. JOSEPH CHANDRA** is currently Head and Associate Professor of English, Department of English, Loyola College, Chennai. He has 32 years of teaching experience at Loyola and is a recognized Research Supervisor for doctoral students in English studies. He has authored five books including 'Power Talk', 'News and Views', 'Soft Skills and 'Personality Development', 'Applied Literary Hermeneutics' and 'Aligning Access' and 'Excellence: A New Paradigm in Higher Education'.



**Dr. V. DAVID JEYABALAN**, Associate Professor, is a senior professor in the Department of English, Loyola College. He has 30 years of teaching experience. His area of specialization and interest is ELT. He is a Member of the Board of Studies in various colleges and a Reviewer for Journals in English Language and Literature. He is also a trainer and English Language Consultant in reputed institutions. Besides authoring a few books he has published a number of research articles in International, national journals and anthologies. He is a Guide and has graduated PhD and several M.Phil Scholars in the field of ELT at Loyola College and other Universities. He also serves as member of various doctoral committees and chairs dissertations across universities.



**Dr. P. MARY VIDYA PORSELVI** teaches in the Department of English, Loyola College, Chennai. She has completed a UGC Minor Project on 'Translation of Folktales with Ecofeminist Concerns from Tamil to English' and has presented/ published research papers in national and international conferences and peer-reviewed journals. She has authored books titled *Bhoomi Tales* (2015), a collection of folktales translated from Tamil to English and a monograph 'Nature's Voices, Women's Voices' (2015) and *Cornucopia - English Language Learning through World Folklore* (2013). She has recently published 'Nature, Culture and Gender: Rereading the Folktale' with Taylor and Francis and Routledge, London (2016) and 'Sylvan Tones: English through Folklore' with Macmillan (2017).



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**Aim & Objectives**

Academic Excellence in research is continued promoting in research support for young Scholars. Multidisciplinary of research is motivating all aspects of encounters across disciplines and research fields in an multidisciplinary views, by assembling research groups and consequently projects, supporting publications with this inclination and organizing programmes. Internationalization of research work is the unit seeks to develop its scholarly profile in research through quality of publications. And visibility of research is creating sustainable platforms for research and publication, such as series of Books; motivating dissemination of research results for people and society.

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## THE ETERNAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN MAN AND NATURE IN RUSKIN BOND'S SELECT SHORT STORIES

**Dr. Alapati. Purnachandra Rao**

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### Abstract

*Oriental religions consider human beings as an integral part of nature. It is observed that the emotional and materialistic needs of humans are primarily derived from Nature. The man-nature relationship has always been mysterious where nature acts as a friend and at times as a destroyer. In recent times, man is showing passive concern towards nature. It is an urgency for humans now to cultivate and continue a fair relationship having a balanced respect for nature unless he has to taste the bitter fruits in future times. Ruskin Bond is a sensitive short story writer in Indian writing in English. His stories reflect his love and concern towards nature, in the form of hills, mountains, streams, rivers, trees, birds and animals. The town of Dehradun is the backdrop of his short stories against which his characters struggle and achieve their dreams. His book, *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*, is a collection of short stories in which he glorifies the role of nature in shaping every moment of humans life. He describes a picturesque representation of India and the mountains in particular. He takes readers around the unexplored Himalayas where human beings enjoy the real essence of their life having interconnectedness with nature.*

**Keywords:** *nature, Dehradun, humans' life, mountains, interconnectedness*

Every religion considers human beings as an integral part of nature in which every creature is nurtured since the inception of the universal actions. Man is born and brought up in the lap of nature like other creatures of animal kingdom. However, unlike animals, man is not benign towards the things in nature though all of his actions are dictated by it. In this context, some writers started befriending with nature having eternal love towards it. Jayita Ghosh in the paper, "Vignettes from Nature and Environment: A Re-reading of Ruskin Bond's Short Stories" states: "The human microcosm easefully merges its boundaries with that of the macrocosm and nature in some way or the other integrates the two, crafting yarns of human preoccupations with it". (Ghosh 2). Wordsworth and Robert Frost are among them who revealed the significance of elements in nature in human beings' life in their poetry. They have also asserted that humans derive much joy when they develop fair relationship with it, having a balanced respect for nature as it envelops everything under the sky.

Ruskin Bond is one of the writer's in English who deals with nature with a sensitive touch in his short stories. His stories are semi-autobiographical in nature, which explain the different phases of his life. The landscape of beautifully depicted in his stories where he mentioned villages, mountains and small cities in a picturesque manner. Dr Khursheed Ahmad Qazi in the paper, "Ecological Ethics and Environmental Consciousness in

Bond's Selected Short stories" says, "Natural Scenic Hills of Dehradun and Mussoorie always constitute the setting of his works and reflect his ardent faith in the healing powers of nature. He forwards his worry for the unthoughtful cruel actions of man towards nature" (Qazi, 294). He takes the readers into his world, Mussoorie and Dehradun, into the charming hills and heavenly beauty. His book, *Our Trees Still Grow in Dehra*, is a collection of eighteen short stories in which he glorifies the role of nature in shaping every moment of humans life. He records his own encounters with nature and unfulfilled desires in his life using his imaginative skills.

Ruskin Bond stories usually take the readers into the world of nature, which is enriched with mountains, pasture, animals, and birds, which are semi-autobiographical in nature. With his acute narration, he leaves the reader with a smile, and hope. The eternal truth is described through human values that are connected to human experience. Bond's stories illustrate the Indian earth that includes the aroma of wet earth, march of birds, the gigantic banyan trees, and the beautiful summers having the fragrance of Mangoes and Gulmohar trees enriching his narrations rich in experience. His stories reflect sympathy as his depiction is realistic transporting readers to the beautiful valleys and hills of Mussoorie that makes everyone a part of that narration.

Ruskin Bond in the story, *All Creatures Great and Small*, conveys the message that interconnectedness with

nature brings the beauty to human being life. He says that while growing up with the members of family, brothers, and sisters, there is a need to understand the company of pet animals in humans' life as they are also giving a lease of life to nature. The story reveals the bonding of the family members with the pets, and the monkey named Toto. The story also brings out the actions of man and animals while living together having the compatibility and agreement in many aspects. The grandfather instils an opinion among the family about the importance of companionship with animals like a monkey, a tortoise, a python, a dog and a great Indian Hornbill. Though there are objections from the family for all the wild life in the home, he cleverly manages them by hiding the creatures in mysterious places in the home. It shows Bond's depiction of relation between man and nature.

Bond has befriended with Ramu, a bonded labourer, who is good at reciting folklores in what he gives a description of animals and birds. Bond learns to swim and listen to Ramu's wise folklores straddling the back of a contented buffalo in the middle of the muddy stream. Bond explains his special friendship with Ramu excepting the frogs and the buffaloes, who have accepted Bond and Ramu as a part of their own world realizing the true companionship. *'All Creatures Big and Small'* is a saga of grandfather's collection of animals and birds and reptiles. His grandfather's love for animals and birds is quite apparent in this narrative reflects the universal relationship between man and nature.

Another story, *'The Last Tonga ride'* describes Bond's innocent account of life with his grandmother and his tonga rides with Bansi Lal, the tonga wala who is a good friend to him. He also explains about his friendship with inanimate objects, the first being a tree, which makes him, enjoy the beautiful moments of his life. In the story, the protagonist returns to his old paternal house to bring back the glory of his relationship with the tree. He describes the blissful company of nature; the tree in particular, how it is friendly touch, even after many decades refills his heart. As a human, he feels that his own life is controlled by nature's gentle force that shapes every aspect of his life. He reminds of the creeper at his window, birds at the ridge, fragrance of the earth at the touch of first shower, the clouds hanging over hills, the moon lit night, and the stars overhead, which make him the tiredness of his life.

The story also depicts the optimistic appeal when the age-old wisdom of Ayah at home guides the narrator to wish on a shooting star that reminded one of hope and true lessons of love. It is no exaggeration to say Bond's attitude

to nature begins from simple sensory delights and culminates into humanism. His narration gently reminds man's caring friendship with nature having divine faith in it.

*'Binya passes by'* is a story which tells about his love, a mountain girl called Binya how she captivates the heart of the author with a classic song while he is wandering down a narrow path where pine and other trees lined on both sides. Bond portrays the merits in Binya while describing her as a symbol of innocence, unconcerned about the passing time and events bearing an empathy with the forest and mountain that makes her special and magical. It is a beautiful story of purity and innocence that reminds of the person long after the person leaves through the beauties of nature. It tells about the mysterious force in nature how it makes a person to fall in love with both the nature and a girl who are the embodiment of charm and calm. The story depicts the beauty of the hills that everyone will relate to in every encounter of human beings' life.

The story, *As Time Goes By* depicts Bond's recalling of his childhood days in the lap of nature and the time he has spent with his childhood friends, Somi and Daljit nearby a small pool. The story explains tales of their growing together in the heart of nature and their parting. Daljit dies in an aircraft crash while Somi joins the Army. After sometime, Bond feels very bad when the old pool has disappeared, because it is the lively caricature of his reminiscences he derives utmost joy, playing with his friends, which is the foundation of his memories. Bond observes that water also changes its path to a new route to form new pool that reminds the narrator about the changing ways of life.

Bond in his fiction imparts man and nature by keeping the earth a beautiful place to play and survive. The story reminds the readers about the honest and truthful relationship of friends and nature. Bond remembers the pool and his friends close to his heart before they depart from each other. Bond explains the changing path of the stream and their lives as two sides of the same coin how nature reflects its mirror image in the actions of human beings. He observes a spiritual spirit dancing around in the shallows of his old pool as he has recollected the honesty in him and his friends.

*'Death of the Trees'* is a story, which portrays the contemporary truth about how the trees are rooted out for the sake of development. It describes a sensitive issue how human beings are destroying the wood on Maplewood hillside while constructing a road, and thereby disturbing the serenity of village atmosphere. V. lyappan and V.

Gnanaprakasham in the paper, "The Denizens and Inseparable Relationship of Nature in the works of Ruskin Bond" rightly states, "Bond's proclamation of right appropriation of nature by humans is the need of the hour. Though humans are dependent on nature for their survival, they should resort to right appreciation of nature. They should not consume the natural resources out of greed rather should utilize them according to their need." (Iyappan, 2). Unfortunately, people now days are showing cruelty towards nature in the name of comfort and convenience.

Bond is intimately associated with nature while he relates the death of his brother in a road accident with the sacrifices of the trees for generations. Bond gives a statistical account that more than a thousand trees, maples, deodars and pines were cut down to build a road until Jabarkhet. Bond wants to move away rather than stay back to enjoy the devastated view of the hillside, as he no longer watches the crimson Minivet birds fluttering through the green bushes of the oaks, the long tailed magpies fly through the trees. The indiscriminate action of man destroys the shelter of birds and animals when they are made to leave the place using the dynamite in the process of developmental activities. He ends the story with a statement: "*Never mind. Men come and go, the mountains remain.*" (94). It is a heart touching story of interrelation of man and nature, which adds beauty to the worldly wisdom.

The above stories of Ruskin Bond provide an opportunity for readers to realize the significance of the natural world in shaping the personality of man. It makes them believe that he or she is an inseparable component of nature. Savita Singh in her paper, "Environment Issues in Ruskin Bond's Select Short Stories" says, "Bond's short

stories show his insatiable love for nature, trees, the mountains and the flora and fauna of the Himalayas." (Singh, 2). It is nature, which makes children, learn the values, shape attitudes and form basic orientation towards the world throughout their lives. He asserts that regular positive interactions with nature help people develop respect and a compassionate attitude for the environment.

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## “DON'T EXPECT THE BEARS TO DANCE” PORTRAYALS OF ANIMALS IN MARGARET ATWOOD'S SELECT POEMS

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### Abstract

*The plight of animals plays a crucial role in ecocritical thought. Ecocritics focus mainly on the inter connectedness between humans and non-human living beings. They also analyse the portrayal of animals in literary texts and evaluate the writers' perception of animal life. It is worthy to note that in some literary texts animals metaphorically represent the oppressed social groups for dominant social groups suppress both. Writers like Margaret Atwood concentrate more the victimization of animals. She often juxtaposes the condition of animals with humans in her writings. In her work, one can easily identify the presence of multitude of animals. Her portrayal of the suffering of hunted or slaughtered brings to light not only the sad plight of animals but also man's urge to bring everything under his control. This study analyses the portrayal of animals in Atwood's poetry and investigates how victimization of animals is a major threat to the ecosystem.*

**Keywords:** Ecocriticism, victimization, animal rights, interconnectedness

Ecocriticism, an interdisciplinary initiative, aims at exploring environmental dimensions of literature. It also examines how a literary text responds or reacts to environmental issues. The kinship between human beings and non-human beings is one of the major concerns of ecocritics. They focus mainly on the portrayals of animals in literary texts and investigate the writers' understanding of animal rights. In his book **The Kindred of the Wild** Charles G.D.Roberts writes about the purpose of an animal story. To him

The animal story is a potent emancipator. It frees us for a little from the world of shop-worn utilities and from the mean tenement of self of which we do well to grow weary. It helps us to return to nature (.....) It leads us back to the old kinship of earth. (Qtd in Moss, 122-123)

The literary landscape of Canada evinces how 'Canadians are fascinated by animals'. While observing animal presence in Canadian short stories Northrop Frye remarks "animals are closely assimilated to human behaviour and emotions". This is true in the case of Canadian poetry also. Canadian poets namely Layton, Atwood, Ondaatje, Atwood, and Nowlan have written much about animals.

Margaret Atwood, one of the most versatile writers of the present, continues to concentrate on the issues that affect the ecosphere including the issue of victimization of animals. She firmly believes "destruction of nature is equivalent to self destruction on the part of man". She has

written extensively about man and his kinship with other non-human beings such as insects, birds, animals etc.

In her critical text **Survival**, Atwood analyses the portrayal of animals in British and American fiction and short stories. According to her in British and American stories animals are presented from the point of view of the hunters and hence the hunted becomes the 'other'. In Canadian animal stories, animals are told from the point of view of the animals. To Atwood "English animal stories are about "Social relations", American ones are about people killing animals; Canadian ones are about animals being killed, as felt emotionally from inside the fur and feathers". (Survival, 74)

Atwood is more concerned with multitude of animals; some of them are wild animals; some of them are domesticated; some of them are caged ones and some of them are in the museums. Animal poems of Atwood concentrate mainly on the victimization of animals and highlights how their lives are under threat due to human intervention.

In the beginning, Atwood's writings used to compare the plight of animals with the plight of Canadians. In her later writings, one can easily identify the assimilation between animals and human beings.

This article tends to analyse the portrayal of animals in Atwood's select poems and examines how violence imposed on animals is a threat to the ecosystem.

The poem "Animals in that country" opens with 'that country' in which the American tendency of killing of



animals for adventure and sport is vividly presented. In fact, "in that country" animals have the faces of people and often killed.

The fox run  
politely to earth, the huntsmen  
standing around him, fixed  
in their tapestry of manners  
the bull, embroidered  
with blood and given  
an elegant death, trumpets, his name  
stamped on him, heraldic brand (Animals 5-12)

In these ceremonial occasions, the hunters offer the victim 'an elegant death' which makes the audience express their happiness for the mighty animal is brought down. This poem metaphorically represents the 'feudal sport' of the colonizer where the colonized is always entrapped and killed.

In contrast to 'that country', 'this country' visualizes a common situation in which the animals have the faces of animals. The death of these animals is not elegant and they possess the faces of no-ones for they die in privacy and without identity.

In fact, the poem starts with the American point of view of animals and ends with the Canadian point of view of animals and it is worthy to note that death of an animal in the Canadian scenario is natural, tragic and pathetic and not a ceremonial one.

Like the poem 'Animals in that country', Animals are trapped and killed in the poem 'Trappers' but the focus is mainly on the trappers rather than the trapped for the trappers are caught up "between the steel jaws of answer dilemma".

Like other 'huntmen' they entrap animals and kill them continuously for they have a great ambition of making 'each / tree and season an owned / territory'. Their urge to impose power on nature and to establish a territory of their own ends in suffering. Atwood says,

I can understand  
the guilt they feel because  
they are not animals  
the guilt they feel  
because they are (Animals 33-37)

'The dead thing the / almost dead' and the smashing of trapped animals force them to move from 'answer dilemma' to 'guilt'. In fact the inescapable guilt they experience that arises out of their own act and their own concern for the victimized for they identify themselves with the victimized animals. The similar kind of tendency can be found in the poem "Brian The Still-Hunter".

Brian hunts for food but not for sport like the colonizers. He says, "I kill because I have to" (Journals 12). Like the trappers who suffer from 'an answerless dilemma' Brian suffers from an inescapable tension for he says, "every time I aim, I feel / my skin grow fur" (Journals 13-14) and he questions "Is God just to his creatures?" (Journals 19). When the hunted one suffers, he also suffers and his compassion for the hunted one makes him feel the guilty of his act. He says, "I die more often than many" (Journals 20). R.P.Bilan rightly says "The killings by Brian The Still-Hunter are given a distinctly Atwood twist as he identifies with the animals he has slain" (7)

Apart from human intervention in the wilderness, Atwood records her criticism on the plight of caged animals in some of her poems. Her concern for the caged animals is revealed in the poem "Dreams of animals". The poem reminds of the Victorian Zoo. Atwood says

Unfortunately, the animals might as well have been suffered and kept in glass cases; / all you could see was what they looked like as they rarely had the chance to display any form of natural behaviour. The arrangement was convenient for the people - with all the animals crowded together, not much walking was involved - but hell on the animals (qtd in Vogt 163)

The poem starts with dream of animals in a natural environment. Atwood says

Mostly animals dream  
of other animal each  
according to its kind. (Procedures 1-3)

They dream of a pleasant life except the nightmares of rodents who dream of huge pink shape with five claws descending. In the wilderness

frogs dream of green golden  
frogs  
sparkling like wet suns  
among lilies.  
(. . . .)

birds dream of territories  
enclosed by songs. (Procedures 9-12)

According to Atwood, their pleasant life in the wilderness ends when they dream of evil in the form of soap and metal.

To Atwood the artificial metal structures crush their dreams for instance the silver fox in the Zoo dreams of digging out and the caged armadillo "no longer dreams / but is insane when walking" The caged animals in the Zoo can only dream of happiness and it is important to note that the cityscape is capable of making the animals insane.

Atwood not only portrays wild animals and their sad plight but also describes the condition of domestic and pet animals and their closeness with human beings.

"Mourning for cats" is a poem included in the recent collection of poems, **The Door**, reveals Atwood's concern for the pets. As the title suggests it is an elegy on the death of an unnamed cat. Atwood says

We get too sentimental  
over dead animals. (The Door 1-2)

Death of animals affects people when they are very close to them. Usually people mourn for death of their pets. Atwood rightly observes

No one laments a spider  
Nor a crab  
Hookworms rate no wailing  
Fish neither  
Baby seals make the grade,  
and dogs, and sometimes owls.  
Cats almost always. (The Door 11-17)

Atwood questions why 'almost always' people mourn for the death of cats instead of other animals? She is of the opinion that they are close to the heart ("the animal soul / stashed somewhere near the heart") and brutal to other forms of life and hence they become a part of human life. In fact, their affection towards human beings makes them mourn for their death as though they have lost their children.

From the poems, which focus mainly on animals, the reader can easily identify Atwood's concern for animals. Her animal poems not only examine the kinship between man and animals but also reiterate the idea that man's alienation from nature and violence against animals will lead to destruction of nature. George Woodcock rightly says.

(.....) the relationship between predator and prey is one of need, not of exploitation. It is man, when he

becomes something more than predator, who introduces exploitation : (.....) the physical victimization of blood sports (....) the cold blooded victimization in the cause of science, where animals are tortured and killed so that men may live a little longer but not necessarily more joyfully. (54)

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## THE HOLISTIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EARTH AND SPIRITUALITY

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### Abstract

*April 22<sup>nd</sup> is celebrated as the Earth Day. No wonder then that people all around the globe, cutting across barriers of race, religion, language, culture etc. embrace this day with special significance. In every domain, it is evident that people of all ages observe a thanksgiving day to the Omnipotent by observing several spiritual practices in sync with divine thoughts as a token of appreciation towards Mother Earth for giving us a beautifully carved space filled with priceless resources and mysterious bounties all around us in various sizes, shapes and hues. Spirituality is a feeling of being connected to the Omnipotent by striving for harmony with the universe with all its animate and inanimate things and comes into focus at specific times of loneliness, emotional stress, physical ailment or when nearing death. This paper is a humble attempt to show how the right semblance of spirituality can be a wonderful way of showing our sincere heartfelt connection with the Almighty and with all his creations making Earth a wonderful place for all its inhabitants. Being spiritual while living on this planet helps us to enjoy life peacefully.*

**Keywords:** April 22<sup>nd</sup>, Earth Day, Spirituality, Harmony and Peacefully

One of the best things to acknowledge is that we humans are all part of nature and not something different from it because our body is made up all the same elements, minerals, and energy that make up the planet. Many quantum physicists and scholars believe that everything in the outer universe is a reflection of our consciousness and our body. They ascertain that 1% water in the planet is the reflection of the same % of water in our bodies! Similarly, we have to remember that we are born out of Mother Earth and that is where we return after our last journey on this earth.

An Inroquois prayer thanks the mother earth, which sustains us, the rivers, and the streams. They in turn supply us with water, the herbs, which provide us medicines for our diseases, the corn, and her sisters. In addition, the beans and squash which give us life, the bushes and trees which provide us with fruits, the wind for banishing diseases and the moon and the stars which give us light when the sun is gone. Lastly thanks is given to the Great Spirit in whom is embodied all goodness and who directs all things for the goodness of his children.

Since we are all moving away from Mother Earth and selflessly destroying all the precious gifts, which she has lain bare for us in nature, our souls, are being bereft of the spirit of humanity. We are getting greedier, more selfish, egoistical, cruel, and violent amidst the teeming humanity and fail to see the cries of the voiceless things in the cosmos. It is in this context that celebration of Earth Day is gaining more prominence than it had in the beginning of 1970.

The man responsible for fixing April 22<sup>nd</sup> as the Earth Day, Mr. Gaylord Nelson was devastated when he saw

before his eyes the vast ravages of 1969 massive oil spill in Santa Barbara, California. Even the public was getting highly perturbed by the effects caused by air and water pollution. This led about 20 million Americans to the streets, parks, and auditoriums to demonstrate for a healthy, sustainable environment in massive coast-to-coast rallies. Thousands of colleges and universities organized protests against the deterioration of the environment. Groups that had been fighting against oil spills, polluting factories and power plants, raw sewage, toxic dumps, pesticides, freeways, the loss of wilderness and the extinction of wild life suddenly realized they shared common values. Later in 1990, Earth Day went global. 200 million people worldwide in 141 countries became instrumental in paving the way for the 1992 United Nations Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro.

Much later in 2010, Earth Day came at a time of great challenge for the environmental community. They had to stand against climate change deniers, well-funded oil lobbyists, reticent politicians, and a disinterested public – to mention a few. All these things only go to show that we are all now at the mercy of Mother Earth and are only too eager to ask her forgiveness for the untold sufferings that we have meted out to her in various ways and taking her for granted. When nature shows her fury in the form of floods, storms, droughts, earthquakes or even volcanic eruptions we think of Mother Earth and pray to her to contain her anguish! Then we become spiritual and vow to please her; tell her that we are sorry and would not try to take her for granted.

Relationship between Mother Earth and spirituality is very conspicuous among the adherents of Paganism

because they pursue their own vision of the Divine and consider it as a direct and personal experience. In many ways, the followers of Paganism are akin to the followers of Hinduism because they too believe in respecting Mother Earth and all her wonderful and mysterious creations. It is from this perspective that both the Pagans as well as the Hindus are regarded as nature worshippers. Their actions are guided all the time by what Mother Earth has given them and seek ways to repay her in as many ways as they can. Ceremonies, festivities myths, folk songs, folk dances all revolve in some way or the other with Mother Earth and are intrinsically woven around the themes connected to human beings. Both have a deep reverence for Mother Earth and so have many rituals connected to the earth.

In fact, according to Pagan author and activist Starhawk, one should express love for the Mother Earth whom she also fondly refers to as Goddess not only with the head and the heart but also with the hands. She implores people to put their hands into the dirt, plant trees, grow food, transform waste to food, and regenerate life. She goes on to say that the Goddess is the earth beneath our feet, the air we breathe, the blood in our veins, the electricity in our brain, the micro-organism in our gut, metabolizing the food we eat and even the waste which returns to the earth as fertilizer for new life.

All these practices, which may be deemed spiritual, are the best ways we know to demonstrate kindness and courtesy towards the Earth, to express our gratitude and wonder, to yield to the mystery and the beauty of it all. To be in the midst of Mother Nature during times of human stress can de-stress us, especially so when we are all alone there in its midst.

Sitting beside a gurgling stream and watching the beautiful butterflies flying all around, watching the huge trees of different varieties, some with fruits and some without, examining the little pebbles under the feet or just looking up at the sky can soothe our senses to a great extent. Observing the dawn that sets in the morning, reverberant with the chirping of the birds or the dusk that sets in at the ebbing of the day make us reverential towards Mother Earth. Similarly when we visit the woods or the dense forests, the wetlands or concrete jungles, we instantly realize that each of these are filled with the marvels of nature and at once we become one with nature.

Alternatively, when we see the beautifully striped zebra, the giraffe with its elongated neck or the kangaroo with its slim long legs, we intrinsically feel one with nature. We can also become aware of the animal kingdom by listening to the cries of various wild animals or to their movements, soft, hard, fast, or slow. When we pause to examine each item that comes under our discerning eyes

in the midst of all these magical spaces, we are filled with awe upon the realization that Mother Earth is so impeccable in her creations that there is nothing on this earth, which is out of place! When we do all these things, in our own/april-2005n way we demonstrate our appreciation of Mother Earth. Thereby, unconsciously in a spiritual way, we eschew violence, anger, irritation, rebellion and a whole lot of negative qualities. Another way of thanking Mother Earth is trying to purify her polluted rivers and seas, planting innumerable trees, especially where they are required to purify the environment. In addition, trying to save dying plants and trees by either watering them or using good fertilizers for their renewed life, refraining from disturbing the flora and fauna in any way, which may be detrimental to them or the living plants and animals within them. Also, seek to have special connection with any of the trees or plants by touching them gently, feeling their tenderness, and secretly praying for their welfare.

Great Siberian Master Anastasia had said that if we create connection with Mother Earth, touching her, taking care of her, speaking with her, cleaning her, sleeping outside and taking care of all that is connected with her (plants, animals, fish and so on) then we create a 'space of love'. In this 'space of love', all that is there assists your evolution here on this planet.

Internationally acclaimed master of meditation Daniel Mitel says that when he followed the 'seeds experiment' as advised by Anastasia, he did so methodically. He kept each group of organic seeds under his tongue so the seeds 'learned' his body requests and needs and after that he planted them in his garden where he would spend about four or five hours per day. Then he would meditate and speak with the earth while walking around it barefoot, giving love, and energy to the seeds and Mother Earth. When the tomatoes, green beans, and green peppers were ready, he would eat them in the middle of the garden being grateful and appreciate for the plants and Mother Earth. Best of it all was that he realized that all the health issues that he had at that time, had also completely disappeared. His explanation for this was that the plants 'learned' of his health and developed just for the needs of his body, the necessary antidote to heal it! According to him, they created a 'space of love'. As per this short but compact analysis, it can be concluded that there definitely is a sure connection between Mother Earth and spirituality.

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## ECO-SENSITIVITY IN SUSAN KORMAN'S THE BEE MOVIE: A JUNIOR NOVEL

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### Abstract

*Susan Korman is an editor and a prolific writer of quite a few works like P is for Philadelphia, over exposed, Top Chefs: Rachael Ray, Wakeup Groundhog, and junior novels like The Bee Movie, How to Train Your Dragon, Sid the Science Kid etc.,. This paper deals with creating eco- sensitivity in the society. The famous work of Susan, 'The Bee movie: A Junior Novel' is taken as an example to discuss, how the impact of human selfishness effects the ecology, how the nature reacts to the adverse acts of greedy humans, how this novella can be claimed as the eye-opener to the mankind. The peculiar concept like "Bees suing the man- Insects at law" is noteworthy. This is to bring awareness among humans towards ecology. Bees are industrious pollinators because they have co-evolved with flowering plants over millions of years. The bees need the flowers for food, while the flower needs the bee to reproduce. Everything in nature is interdependent. Therefore, if there is a negative disruption at a minute point in the cycle of nature, it affects the entire ecological balance. According to the novella and as per the nature, a honey bee plays a vital part in the perpetuation of plant life. So, this kind of micro fiction will surely bring a macro change in human tendency.*

This paper deals with creating eco- sensitivity in the society. The famous work of Susan, 'The Bee movie: A Junior Novel' is taken as an example to discuss, how the impact of human selfishness effects the ecology, how the nature reacts to the adverse acts of greedy humans, how this novella can be claimed as the revelation to the humankind. The peculiar concept like "Bees suing the man- Insects at law" is noteworthy. This is to bring awareness among humans towards ecology. Bees are industrious pollinators because they have co-evolved with flowering plants over millions of years. The bees need the flowers for food, while the flower needs the bee to reproduce. Everything in nature is interdependent. Therefore, if there is a negative disruption at a minute point in the cycle of nature, it affects the entire ecological balance. According to the novella and as per the nature, a honeybee plays a vital part in the perpetuation of plant life. Therefore, this kind of micro fiction will surely bring a macro change in human tendency.

A honey bee named Barry B. Benson is a fresh graduate and was about to enter hive's Honex Industries for making honey along with his friend Adam Flayman with excitement. However, his non-conformist attitude emerges upon discovering that his choice of job will never be changed once picked. These two bees run into a group of Pollen Jocks, where bees collect the pollen from the flowers outside the hive. The Jocks allotted the work to Barry to collect pollen from a particular flower patch. The

first expedition of Barry's pollen gathering is in New York City. He gets lost in the rain and ends up on the balcony. There lives a Florist named Vanessa. Ken the boyfriend of Vanessa notices the bee tries to squash the bee, but Venessa gently catches Berry, releases him through the window, and saved his life.

Berry expresses his gratitude by visiting Venessa again by violating the rule that bee should not have any relation with humans that is the 'Bee law.' Both of them became good friends. One day Berry went to a grocery store along with Venessa and shocked to see honey bottles. Barry came to know that humans are stealing their honey. He also finds how the bee smokers are spoiling their colony. With rage and anger Barry decides to sue the human race to put an end to their exploitation, slowly nature will be destructed without bee.

The mission of Barry attracts both the bee and humans. Barry wins the trial by exposing the jury to the cruel treatment of humans. Next day, Barry wins the trial by exposing the jury to the cruel treatment to which the bees are subjected. The smokers and humans are banned from stealing honey. Then the honeycombs are brimming with honey and no work for bees.

Bee plays a vital role in pollination. When the bee sits on the flower, the pollen grains will be attached to their legs and they will be carried along with them to the other flowers. In this manner, they help in pollination. Slowly the flowering plants began to die because of florists. No

flowers for florists. The only flowers left with healthy pollen are those in a flower parade called "The Tournament of Roses". Barry and Vanessa travel to the parade and steal a parade float, which they load onto a plane to be delivered to the bees so they can re-pollinate the world's flowers.

Armed with the pollen of the last flowers, Barry and the Pollen Jocks manage to reverse the damage and save the world's flowers with the pollen of last flowers, the writer shows that the humans and bees are working together. In nature, everything is interdependent. The sale of "bee-approved" honey shows that humans have taken bee permission to eat and sell honey, which shows the harmony between man and nature. Barry becomes a member of the Pollen Jocks, helping to pollinate the world's plants. Barry is also seen running a law firm inside Vanessa's flower shop, titled "Insects at Law", handling disputes between animals and humans.

In conclusion, this type of stories and animation films will surely make humans Eco sensitive. We should realize that man is the part and parcel of the nature. Everything is interdependent. If you save nature, Nature will save you.

Let us all walk hand in hand to save God's Dear Green Earth.

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## A FEW ORNITHOLOGICAL REFERENCES IN TAMIL SANGAM LITERATURE – A STUDY

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### Abstract

Of all the world literature, the Tamil Sangam literature classified the landscapes based on the geographical nature of those places. The five eco-zones that are hills (Kurinji), forests (Mullai), crop land (Marudham), deserts (Palai), coastal regions (Neidhal) are also known as *Thinai*. Each *thinai* or the eco-zone has exclusive flora and fauna. The paper attempts to present a brief description of the basic and specific distribution of such species across and among all the five eco-zones. It further studies and identifies certain bird species mentioned in the poems. For example, certain species of doves and pigeons such as blue rock pigeon, spotted dove, Eurasian collared dove are identified and described based on the description of the diagnostic features of the birds and the habitat description as mentioned in the poems of Tamil sangam literature.

**Keywords:** Tamil literature, sangam literature, flora, fauna, birds, *tholkappiyam*, *thinai*, eco-zones.

When the western civilizations were in their primal stage, Tamils were well advanced not only in their lifestyle but also in their knowledge of environment. It is evident from the Sangam Literature that people in those days had a great understanding of their ecosystem and its flora and fauna. The landscapes that were divided during that period have relevance even in this modern world.

The *thinai* also means conduct, manners or culture associated with each eco zone. It was deemed that the ecological aspects of each zone influenced the culture and life of the people.

The sangam poems have nature, love, valour and the life of people as predominant themes. In addition, they are divided into two subjects: *agam* and *puram*. *Agam*, in Tamil language is synonymous to self, inner, home. The poems that are grouped under this category talk about people's 'love and domestic life'. Though they are personal in nature, they remain impersonal, as no name is associated with the characters. This feature helps any reader to relate themselves with characters and emotions presented.

*Puram* in Tamil language means exterior or public life. It discusses the communal life of people and king's gallantry and charity and the wars. *Puram* poems refer to many kings, the names of them being explicit or implied.

The people's lives were always integrated with nature. The kind of ecosystem in which people lived characterised their lifestyle. To summarise, the land in which people lived were divided into different eco zones, which was called as '*thinai*'.

Five *thinai*s: *kurinji*, *mullai*, *marutham*, *neithal*, and *paalai*.

*Kurinji* refers to the mountains and associated landforms.

*Mullai* refers to the forests and associated landforms.

*Marutha* refers to the plains and associated landforms.

*Neithal* refers to the sea and associated land forms.

*Palai* in general refers to desert and associated land forms.

However, desert has never been part of Tamil Nadu's landscape and hence, it is believed that when the *Kurinji* and *Mullai* lands lost their true nature due to draught or other natural or anthropogenic activities the landscapes transformed into *palai* (desert). Hence, it was considered as another landscape (Varadarajan.M (1969).

Several fauna and flora associated with these landscapes are mentioned in these poems. The following paragraphs talk about two species (Rock pigeon and Spotted dove) mentioned in some of the poems. The identification of the species is done on their description, their habits, and habitats as described by the poets.

Blue Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*, "...has grayish head, iridescent green and purple on neck and throat, light gray back and belly, pale gray wings with two dark wing bars.... medium squared light gray tail with black terminal band. Bill is dark gray and legs pink."

(birding.in/birds/Columbiformes/Columbidae/rock\_pigeon)

"They, in the wild state live in colonies, roosting on ledges, and in fissures and holes in rock scarps, crumbling hill forts, ancient ruins, or down the shafts of old wells" (Ali,

Salim & Ripley S. Dillon. 1987 Vol 3 211). We commonly see these birds in metros. These birds are comfortable in the city landscape because of the high raised skyscrapers of the city.

In Tamil language, this species is called as *maadappura*. *Maadam* (மாடம்) in Tamil refers to projections or cavity similar to the spaces designed in houses. As these spots are very similar to the crevices and gaps in the hillocks, this species prefers them for roosting and nesting.

This description of the birds and its habitat in *Nedunalvaadai* is found in 45 - 48 poems. The first line states "Manai urai (living in a house) puravi sengaal seval (male pigeon with red legs)

It talks about a male pigeon with red legs that live in the house. Though several other pigeons have pinkish or red legs, the Rock pigeon is the only pigeon that resides in human houses.

This description of 'red legs' is made in several other poems as well when the poets talk about Rock Pigeon.

In the poem mentioned before both of these features are stated. The first line "Manai urai puravi sengaal seval..." means 'a male red legged pigeon that lives in the house'.

மனை உறை புறவின் செங் கால் சேவல்  
இன்புறு பெடையொடு மன்று தேர்ந்து உண்ணாது  
இரவும் பகலும் மயங்கி, கையற்று.  
மதலைப் பள்ளி மாறுவன இருப்ப : (Nedunalvaadai  
45 – 48)

(The house-residing, red-legged male  
pigeon and his pleasurable mate  
did not go to the town's common  
grounds in search of food.)

This scene appears in *Nedunalvaadai*, which is part of *Paththupattu* collection. The poet has explained the longing of a heroine, who waits for the hero's return from the war. As it was a season of cold weather, the birds residing in the house find it difficult to differentiate night and day. "The house-residing, red-legged male pigeon and his pleasurable mate did not go to the town's common grounds in search of food. Unable to distinguish night and day, the confused, helpless pair rested on a plank under the eaves, lifting one tired leg at a time."  
(sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/paththupattu  
nedunalvadai)

A similar description is made in *Akananuru's Ettuthokai* in which the hero, of loneliness, yearns to meet his beloved on watching a male pigeon ambling towards its mate. The loneliness is so painful that even the sunrise and the sunset remind the hero of his beloved wearing bangles

that illumines and shines alike. The hero feels similar to the red-legged pigeon that trails its mate in a spacious lonely house. (sangamtranslationsbyvaidehi.com/ettuthokai-akananuru-1-100)

Another species that appears in sangam literature is spotted dove *Spilopelia chinensis*.

"...மணிப்புறாத் துறந்த மரம் சோர் மாடத்து எழுது..." ("manipurath thurantha maram sor maadathu eluthu..." *Akanānūru* 167), which means ... "an old, ruined building with small rooms, loose bricks on its tall walls, its cross beams have fallen down, doves have abandoned the place, the rafters on the ceiling have fallen down..."

The scene is set in the zone '*Palai*' (dry arid land) and the bird cited in it is '*manipura*'. Though its common name is spotted dove, depending on the region it varies. The common name takes its origin by the black and white pattern on its neck, which looks more like chessboard squares. As a result, the bird has also been called spot-necked, pearl-necked, or lace-necked dove. The bird only uses trees, bushes, or bamboo clusters for nesting, but as the great Indian ornithologist Salim Ali has stated, "They also commonly nest under eaves and on cornices and rafters in veranda's of inhabited bungalows." (Ali, Salim; Ripley S. Dillon., 1987. 218). 'unlike Rock pigeon – discussed earlier nests in rocky cliffs and gorges in the hills, old ruins, ancient forts on the country side, factory and warehouse sheds, residential and public buildings, temples, railways stations etc, in populous cities (Ibid. 126).

Venpoothiyar has mentioned this species in *Kurunthogai* 174. He has described it as "...pori mayir erutthin kurunadai pedai..." (பொறி மயிர் எருதின குறு நடைப் பேடை). The phrase "pori mayir erutthin" means, "Spotted hairy neck" which is a reference to spots on the neck of the spotted dove. Though Indian Little Brown or Senegal Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis*. Also, have spots they are not that prominent as former.

மிளகு பெய்தனைய கவைய புன் காய்  
உலறு தலை உகாஅய்ச் சிதர் சிதர்ந்து உண்ட  
புலம்பு கொள் நெடுஞ் சினை ஏறி நினைந்து தன்  
பொறி கிளர் எருத்தம் வெறி பட மறுகி  
புன் புறா உயவும் வெந் துகள் இயவின் (Natrinaai  
66)

(My daughter left to be with her lover,  
on a dusty path, where a pigeon chases  
away honeybees and eats small, tasty ukā  
berries that look like pepper, feels giddy,  
sits on a tall tree branch and shakes his bright,  
spotted neck in pain, regretting what he did.



Inisantha Nakanar beautifully depicts the psychological trauma that the heroine's mother undergoes when the heroine sets out with her beloved, leaving her mother. The worried mother describes the vacant place where she uses the image of a dove that chases bees and eats uka berries; the dove, as described, (பொறி கிளர் எருத்தம் – spotted bright neck) is said to have spots on its neck therefore indicating spotted dove. The line 'பொறி கிளர் எருத்தம் வெறி பட மறுகி' also talks about a particular behaviour (head bobbing) of the bird. The behavior (bobbing of the head) is, often considered, due to the uka berries, which are pungent and hot. However, this behavior has also been interpreted as the courtship display to win its mating rights.

"Male has the characteristic bowing courtship – head lowered, throat inflated, and cooing"

பொறி வறிப் புறவின் செங்கால் சேவல்  
சிறு புன் பெடையொடு சேண் புலம் போகி  
அரி மணல் இயவில் பரல் தேர்ந்து உண்டு  
வரி மரல் வாடிய வறன் நீங்கு நனந்தலைக்  
குறும்பொறை மருங்கின் கோள் சுரம் நீந்தி  
நெடுஞ்சேண் வந்த நீர் நசை வம்பலர்  
செல் உயிர் நிறுத்த சுவைக் காய் நெல்லிப்  
பல் காய் அம் சினை அகவும் அத்தம் (Akananuru 271)

(If you decide to go and earn wealth that does not last,  
....passing through an uninhabited land, where  
....a red-legged pigeon with spots and lines  
....flies to a distant place with his delicate  
....female chooses and eats stones?  
....on a path with bright sand, flies to a  
....beautiful branch of a nelli tree with many  
....fruits that are life savers to those who are  
....thirsty, and coos in the murderous  
....dry land that has lost rain, and striped  
....hemp plants have withered in vast areas near  
....the small hills,  
May your efforts be successful!)

Apart from giving us an outstandingly detailed description of an arid landscape, the poem provides certain uncommon facts. The poet calls this habitat as a arid land with bright, soft sand, eroded sand (அரி மணல் – ari manal) where thirsty travellers from long distance satisfy their thirst by eating (சுவைக் காய் நெல்லி – delicious Indian gooseberries) Indian gooseberries.

Some non-scientific interpretations have considered this dove to be a unique species that feeds on stones. However, it can be deduced that people of that era have observed the birds' behavior in detail. A similar observation is made in Pattinapaalai when the writer describes the city

Kaveripoompatinam containing a description of a dove eating stones. This description 'thoothunum puravoodu thuchil sekkum' (தூதுணம் புறவொடு துச்சில் சேக்கும் 53-58) and 'thoothu un am puravu' (தூது உண் அம் புறவு) of *kalithokai* is a fine example of such observation.

Nevertheless, it is of academic interest to note that certain species of birds are in the habit of consuming stones. "Avian lithophagy appears to reflect diet; seed-eaters often have many small stones in their gizzards, whereas carnivores, omnivores, and frugivores less frequently have small stones and stones are less abundant when present". Birds do this for several reasons. Studies have indicated that birds swallow stones as a kind of 'self medication' like removal of parasites from their stomach walls by perfunctory scratching due to intestinal movements. Studies have also proved that some water birds like cormorants do devour small stone to better their bouncy in water (Wings, O. 2007).

However, there are several other bird species mentioned in the Sangam Tamil literature, this paper talks about Rock pigeon and Spotted dove. These excerpts are few of the several examples where avi fauna and their habitat are described in detail in Sangatamil literature. It only emphasises the kind of understanding and knowledge Tamils had on nature.

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## POLITICIZED ECOLOGY: THE DISAPPEARING PAPUAN CULTURE

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### Abstract

Papua Island lies to the east of Indonesia and north of Australia. It is estimated that people have been living in the Island for more than 50,000 years. It is a land of great ancient culture. Since 19th century to 1960s it has been ruled by European colonizers. The western half of the Island, West Papua has been occupied by Indonesia as soon as it got independence from the Dutch in the year 1962. They do not even belong to a single ethnic group as Papuans are Melanesians and Indonesians are Malays. The only common factor is that both the nations are previously the colonies of the Dutch. With military force, Indonesia has been exploiting the rich minerals and resources of the land. Surely, the occupation is only for material gains. USA, England, and Australia take the lion's share from mining of the land. In the process of colonisation, the natives have been deprived of their valuable culture and the ecology of the land is destroyed and degraded to such a level that the natural habitat is in grave danger and large number of rare species are already extinct. The Papuans have been dispossessed and displaced in their own land. Their oil reserves, flora and fauna, mangrove forests, coastal vegetation, coral reefs, etc. have taken a beating. The local governments are complacent towards the impending danger. It has become a place of modern genocide as the Colonizers wiped away most of the forest cover of the territory. Bruce Pascoe's *Ruby-eyed Coucal* (1996), Frans Welman's *West Papua Free!!* (2011), Eben Kirksey's *Freedom in Entangled Worlds* (2012), etc. are works that portray the nation in crisis.

**Keywords:** Ecology, post-colonialism

Melanesians belonged to the land of Papua. Germany, Britain and Netherlands were responsible for the division of Papua land into East and West Papua, though people of both the regions belong to the same ethnic group. The island was bifurcated with a straight line. Different colonial powers, ruled both the nations, and later, West Papua by Indonesia with the 'Act of Free Choice'. Unfortunately, the largest peace promoting organization of the world, UNO approved the illegal invasion. Certainly, the international companies, owned by the politicians and ministers in power, had a key role to play in its occupation.

Authors like Bruce Pascoe, Eben Kirksey and Frans Welman have portrayed the annihilation of native Papuan culture in the hands of Indonesia. The neighboring Australia is complacent, in a way supports the occupation. Papua Island, which is known for its rich minerals, flora and fauna, lies to the east of Indonesia and north of Australia. It is estimated that people have been living in West Papua for more than 50,000 years. It is a land of great ancient culture:

"West Papua has been inhabited for at least 30,000 years. The indigenous peoples have retained many of their early forms of living. They are scattered throughout the whole territory in small clans and are kept apart by terrain, language, and customs. No indigenous language has more than 150,000 speakers, and some languages are spoken

by only a few thousand people. The people live mainly by subsistence farming, consuming edible roots and pigs." (Rumley, Dennis, et al., 2006, 113)

Since 19th century to 1960s, the Dutch colonized West Papua and Indonesia occupied it as soon as it got independence in 1962. They do not even belong to a single ethnic group as Papuans are Melanesians and Indonesians are Malays. The only common factor is that both the nations were the colonies of the Dutch. With military force, Indonesia has been exploiting the rich minerals and resources of the land. Surely, the occupation is only for material gains. In the process of colonisation, the natives have been deprived of their valuable culture and the Indonesian government and its army have mocked at the decrees of human rights.

Papuan land had tribal societies before the advent of Europeans. They had a trading system and maintained small-scale industries that design wooden artifacts. The colonization of the land by the Dutch and the arrival of people from other parts of Europe disturbed the routine affairs of the land. Especially, during World War II the Japanese invaded Australia via Papua. In addition, Australia with the help of American troops fought against the Japanese. In addition, the place they chose to fight was Papua. Aletta Biersack remarks:

"Through trade, marriage, and travel, they (natives) have moved among one another, imported to and exported from one another, defined themselves in opposition to one another, created hybrid cultural forms. In the history of the area, syncretism is not just an artifact of colonialism; syncretism is the ordinary state of affairs. Through administrative patrols, missionization, and capitalist incursions, colonialism brought the West to the doorsteps of these peoples, creating yet another context for intercultural activities: travel, exchange, language learning, ritual sharing, borrowing and lending, and warfare." (Biersack, Aletta. 5-6)

Sandra Marker in her paper titled, "Effects of Colonization", remarks that the source of the conflict of West Papua lies in the Western colonial policies, like, treatment of indigenous populations, the privileging of some groups over others, the uneven distribution of wealth, local governmental infrastructures, and the formation of non-democratic or non-participatory governmental systems. It takes time for any nation for its transition from a colonized territory to an independent state. Moreover, it is highly difficult to get a consensus in a nation like Papua because of the geographical diversity as it is spread into many islands. Even before Papuans planned a governmental structure, Indonesia unexpectedly occupied West Papua and claimed for its possession. In addition, the 'Act of Free Choice' granted to the Papuans by the United Nations, made West Papua a part of Indonesia in the year 1969, and West Papua was named Irian Jaya. One thousand and twenty five Papuan men were asked to choose between sovereignty and Indonesian citizenship. In addition, they voted for the latter. There are allegations that Indonesian Government handpicked the Papuan representatives. By doing so, it has denied the fundamental right to freewill of the native Papuans.

"Act of Free Choice was a vote in Western New Guinea in 1969 that asked whether the population favored remaining with Indonesia or becoming independent. The selected representatives of the population unanimously chose union with Indonesia and the result was accepted by the United Nations, although the validity of the vote has been challenged in retrospect." (*Act of Free Choice*, Wikipedia)

Since then, the West Papuans have been subjected to the brutality of Indonesian military for almost five decades, during which more than 100,000 Papuans were killed. Their houses were burnt down, gardens were destroyed and the cattle were shot to death. It has become a place of modern genocide as the Colonizers committed mass

murders to keep their hold on the occupied country. There have been many instances where the Indonesians violated human rights:

"The abuse and neglect of the Indigenous people by the Indonesian Government and Military has been \_\_\_\_\_ and continues to be in severe violation of their basic human right. The severe and constant violation of all basic human rights has left the native people with a painful history of bloodshed, demoralization, displacement and heartache." (*Human Rights*. Web)

Increased sexual violence is a result of Colonization. Papuan women have suffered dreadful violence including rape, torture, slaughter, illegal detention, assault, slavery, sexual exploitation and abduction. Large numbers of Indonesian troops who are deputed to quell Papuan resistance have committed sexual crimes on them. It is pathetic that women are raped inside their houses, in the presence of their family members at the gunpoint, by the army in the name of hunt for rebels. The brutalities on women are used as a weapon to terrorize and demoralize the rebels. If at all any crime comes to the public notice, the Indonesian soldiers are sentenced to less than one-year imprisonment. Agus Alua, Chair of the MRP (Majelis Rakyat Papua/ Papuan People's Council) remarks:

"Everywhere, we are being raped and subjected to sexual molestation, in prisons, out in the fields, whenever seeking refuge, whenever the army and the police conduct operations in the name of security, and even in our own homes. We are victims of violence." (*West Papua Report Jan 2011 Highlights*)

Papuans formed OPM (Organisasi Papua Merdeka - Free Papua Organization), a militant organization to fight against Indonesians in 1965. It's been trying through various means for the liberation of Papua and to overthrow the Indonesian government from ruling the land. They could not digest the slow disappearance of their cultures, customs and mining of the land in the name of modernity. They get little support from the neighboring countries. Australia indirectly supports Indonesia for its selfish reasons as they share an oil basin and gets a share from mining. So also, Papua New Guinea, which is under the Australian imperial rule. In addition, the support of USA and Britain to Indonesia suppresses the plan of any support from the other nations of the world.

Colonialism certainly encouraged ethnic rivalry for ages. Imperialist countries favor one ethnic group over others by providing them resources, which resulted in rivalry among the groups. Fortunately, colonization in West Papua has united all the tribes. The tribes like the Mek, the

Yali and the Ok never had good relations among themselves, as there was competition for control over traditional lands. However, they could immediately unite against Indonesians.

Karl Marx's economic formula, 'the right to plunder the interior', can aptly be applied to the occupation of West Papua. The Indonesian government deceives a treacherous plan of action to occupy Papua, politically. They plan to mine the land after occupying it. They cannot do it without the help of Australia and Papua New Guinea. In addition, the Papuans will lose their motherland and ancient rich culture. The foreign mining corporations will exploit Papua's natural resources and in turn, Indonesian Government will receive billions of money in the form of taxes.

According to Partha Chatterjee, the script of anti-colonial liberation was written by Euro-American intellectuals to further neocolonial schemes. She further suggests that the prevailing model of independent postcolonial states is copied from colonial states. West Papuans are not knowledgeable of the preciousness of their land. Same time, we cannot neglect the support of the developed nations to Indonesian Government.

"The USA and its allies were aware of the massive gold, oil, gas and copper resources in West Papua... The USA's, Britain's and Australia's major corporations such as Freeport, Rio Tinto, British Petroleum, BHP Billiton, etc. make billions out of West Papua with a seeming exclusivity agreement with Jakarta. Tax revenues from Irian Jaya (West Papua) account for more than one sixth of the total tax revenues received by the Indonesian Government." (Austin, Mark. Web)

Bruce Pascoe says that Papua used to be a paradise for agriculture. It was considered as one of the world's most eternally productive places:

"Prior to permanent settlement by foreigners in the 1870s, more than 170 plant species were used by Papua New Guineans for food. As well, hundreds of other species provided materials for shade, firewood, medicine, tools, weapons, house and fence construction, decoration, rope, string, food wrappings, bark cloth, dress, personal adornment, canoe, and raft construction, and ritual and magic purposes." (Bourke R. Michael, and Harwood Tracey, 15)

Destruction of the environment of Papua has resulted in the abuse of cultural, economic and social rights. It aggravated extreme poverty among native Papuans particularly through denial of access to education. Cultural ethnocide has been continuing and becoming severe day by day. When somebody tries to destroy the culture of a nation or of people, they are destroying the cultural practices, languages, traditional customs and habits of the people. Therefore, the native culture is being systematically destroyed for the possession of precious resources of the land. The Postcolonial principles - Social and cultural erosion; misuse of power and exploitation, can be traced in the occupation of West Papua.

Bruce Pascoe's *Ruby-eyed Coucal* (1996), Frans Welman's *West Papua Free!!* (2011), Eben Kirksey's *Freedom in Entangled Worlds* (2012) exposed the truth behind the crisis. Bruce Pascoe is a very popular aboriginal writer of Australia, who brought into light the miserable conditions of the native Papuans with his work, *Ruby-eyed Coucal*. Frans Welman is a photojournalist and a documentary filmmaker. He stands by the aborigines in attaining their right to self-determination. Eben Kirksey has visited West Papua as an exchange student in 1998 and later accompanied indigenous activists to Congressional offices in Washington D.C. He has travelled across the nation and ventilated his anguish on the exploitation of highly precious resources of the land.

## VISUALIZATION OF ANIMALS AS MAN'S BEST FRIEND IN RUSKIN BOND'S FICTION

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### Abstract

*In the advent of modern technology, every child has got an opportunity to visualize animal fiction at their doorsteps. Language and intercontinental distance is not a barrier for it. In contrast, to their parental generation, children in the modern era are seldom exposed to the real animal world; neither had they visited well-maintained animal sanctuary nor forest ride. In this context, Ruskin Bond a well-known children's writer creates animal as a friendly character in his fiction. Every child has an opportunity to enjoy and visualize the variety of animals in their natural habitat at the foothills of Himalayas. In the era of animated movies, his fiction impels children to learn to cohabit with nature. This paper tries to project animals as friendly characters and insists young reader's life is to live with nature.*

**Keywords:** *anthropomorphic, narcissism, domesticated*

Ruskin Bond a well-known children's writer, he has written more than five hundred short stories, poems, novellas, travelogues and some entertaining ghost stories for children. For his contribution to literature, he was awarded the John Llewellyn Rhys Memorial prize in 1957, the Sahitya Akademi award in 1992 for his English writing in India. Ruskin Bond in his stories creates animal as a friendly character. Every child has an opportunity to enjoy and visualize a variety of animals in their natural habitat at the foothills of Himalayas. In the era of animated movies, his fiction impels children to learn to cohabit with nature. This paper tries to project animals as friendly characters and insists young reader's life is to live with nature.

Ruskin Bond's interview with Divya Kumar informs us "Ruskin Bond's stories are imbued with a gentle humor, warmth, and kindness that have made them loved by generations of children and adults" (Kumar 1+). Animals in his fiction give zeal to the young reader.

One can trace the origin of children's literature from Caxton, who in 1484 first printed *Aesop Fables* in English, which is widely used by teachers and parents. These fables were written in clear language and the picture illustrations to attract the attention of young children. In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, these fables were first introduced in schools. The art of storytelling for children has evolved over generations from imaginary events spread by word of mouth to realistic fiction. According to encyclopedias on children's literature, there are various types of children's literature. The animal stories are one amongst them.

International Companion Encyclopedia of Children's Literature by Peter Hunt has an essay on "Animal Stories." On that William Steig's opines that why he uses animals in his fiction and they play a predominant role in children's fiction not only to create an interest and also to project animals in children's books is in an "anthropomorphic way to mirror children's own behavior" (Steig 292). He uses animals in his stories to "emphasize the fact that the story is symbolic - about human behavior" (293).

The ultimate aim of the children's literature is to convey knowledge in an interesting simple form to understand the values through the stories. Animal stories inspire children; they love their pet animals and are always curious to know about their whereabouts. Domestic animals in the stories play a role of companionship and give comfort to the young readers. The creation of animals as a hero to inform the events creates interest in young children. Animals never speak in real life, and they do not have magical powers. This kind of creation is popular among children because they are out of the ordinary. The history of *Little Goody Two - Shoes* (1765) is a book for older boys and young teenagers who like to read stories of animals in jungles and are thrilled by the experiences of wild animals (Barker 282).

Rudyard Kipling was a poet, novelist and a famous short story writer. He wrote many animal stories. He wrote for children and many of his works like *Jungle Book* (1894), *Stalky&Co* (1897) and *Kim* (1901) which are in the classical animal story tradition. *Mowgli*, a protagonist of a *Jungle book*, comprises his experience in the jungle with animals. Animals are the characters in the stories, and they convey

the moral. This kind of creation is popular among young children. Among contemporary animal storywriters, Ranjit Lal's writings project the bond between nature and humans. Panchatantra stories are best examples of animal stories in children's literature in India.

In contemporary writers, Ruskin Bond is no doubt, dedicated his writings to young readers through his fiction in simple and entertaining manner. In Bond's stories animal plays an important role in protagonist's life. Protagonist enjoys his life utmost with his pets. He has written and edited volumes of animal stories, but this paper projects a few animal stories of Ruskin bond, which are projected as a man's best friend and people's relationship with nature.

Ruskin Bond's art of characterization requires special attention as this enriches his stories, have projected the people and children of various ages and classes belong to the hills of Garhwal and Doon valleys. It is a general notion that people living in the mountains are simple, modest, hardworking and naive as they live with nature. Naturally, they have an opportunity to enjoy and visualize a variety of animals in their natural habitat.

Bond gives a special role towards nature in his writing. Nature provides him new themes and backdrops for his stories and stimulates Bond's creative talent. His "All Creatures Great and Small" is a story of a python that accidentally enters the bedroom and was attracted to its own reflection in the mirror. This imaginative writing is symbolic of narcissism. Bond elevates this fearful reptile to the level of heroes in epic style. He does not consider them inferior to humans and brings out the ecological value through them. They are also an important part of nature just like human beings.

This paper attempts to concentrate on Bond's stories, which project the values of "concern for nature" and "Live with nature." "All Creatures Great and Small," "A Tiger in the House," "Snake Trouble," and "Monkey Trouble" are stories which talk about bonding with animals.

The story "All Creatures Great and Small" introduce the protagonist as a curious boy, who lives with his grandparents. His grandfather's love for animals turns the house into a menagerie. "I had as my companions an odd assortment of pets, which included a monkey, a tortoise, a python and a Great Indian Hornbill. The person responsible for all this wildlife in the home was my grandfather" (Ruskin Bond Collected Fiction 424). The protagonist learns the value of love for animals "the Great Danes were gentle creatures, and I would like to astride one of them and go for rides round the garden" (425). The highlighted value of ecological balance

is expressed through the narration of Indian mythological tales. Through his friendship with Ramu, the protagonist learns about Indian mythology, "Many birds are sacred," said Ramu, as we watched a blue jay swoop down from a peepul tree and carry off a grasshopper. He told me that both the blue jay and the God Shiva were called Nilkanth" (434). The young readers of these stories love to imagine their life to live with all creatures both on and off the land, great and small.

"A Tiger in the House" is a story about the hunting expedition undertaken by protagonist's grandfather. Grandfather brings home a tiger cub and names him Timothy. Timothy rapidly grows within six months and creates fear in the house. Even though the grandmother showers love towards pets, she is apprehensive about keeping a wild animal at home and thinks that a tiger cannot be domesticated. She foretells, 'we are going to find Timothy sitting on Mahmoud's (a cook) bed, and no sign of the cook except his clothes and shoes!' (Ruskin Bond Collected Fiction 376). This story projects the advice of the protagonist of the story gains knowledge about wild animals and the reason why keeping wild animals at home is not advisable.

Like, tiger, grandfather brought home a pet monkey in the story named "Monkey Trouble." It is a humorous story about the mischievous activities of Tutu, the family's pet monkey. Tutu imitates others while taking a bath in the tub and dances around. It grabs jewelry from the shop in the bazaar and adorns its neck and finally, it drops it in the nearby canal (Too Much Trouble 62). An astonished crowd of people who followed the monkey retrieves the necklace from the canal. The author portrays the mischievous and humorous aspect of protagonist's character through Tutu Monkey, which makes the narration lively. For instance, in the story, he narrates the mischievous monkey as "It was only Tutu tries on Aunt Ruby's petticoats! They were much too large, of course, and when Aunt Ruby entered the room all she saw was a faceless white blob jumping up and down on the bed" (Too Much Trouble 53). Such narrations frequent in his stories to introduce humor and to create interest among readers.

Another interesting incident happens in protagonist's life when he travels along with a young python on the train with his grandfather and the rest of the family. "Snake Trouble" discusses the adventures of the python and grandfather's pets while traveling in the train to visit protagonist's Aunt, Ruby, in Lucknow. The sudden disappearance of the python creates confusion in the

compartment. "We can't get into the toilet,' said someone. There's a huge snake inside' " (Too Much Trouble 43). The grandfather, however, captures the Python in the train's toilet; later, he releases it in the aunt's garden in Lucknow.

The domesticated animals in a household are good companions for the family members including a child. Through these stories, Bond not only inculcates that love towards all species of the animal are supreme and insists that wild animals must have their right to live in the forest. The author also sounds in young minds the need and importance to re-establish forests. He highlights that every human should respect the home of wild animals and their natural habitat. The author inculcates in children to express compassion towards all animals and to understand the delicate balance in nature.

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## SITA'S ECOCENTRIC EXISTENTIALISM IN ANITA DESAI'S WHERE SHALL WE GO THIS SUMMER?

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### Abstract

Ecocentrism is based on the concept that all organisms are evolved from Earth and thus Earth becomes the metaphor for Life. This paper aims at studying the influence of nature on the behaviour of the protagonist Sita in **Anita Desai's** novel **Where Shall We Go This Summer?** The very name Sita which means 'Earth' suggests her rootedness to earth and the elements around her. Motherless Sita spends her childhood unrestrained in the lap of Nature and the Sea, trees, and animals become the motif of life for her. After her father's death, Sita is transplanted to the city and after her marriage with Raman to a small flat in the congested metropolitan city of Bombay. As years pass by life in the city becomes traumatizing for her and she is appalled by the destructive elements around her, even when her children are at play. Sita then decides not to bring her fifth baby into this chaotic world. She exhibits signs of neurotic behaviour and in a desperate move; she once again turns to nature as a refugee. She fails to understand her husband Raman's love and concern for her. Finally from Mother Earth Sita learns to face the realities of life and she decides to return to her family.

**Keywords:** Ecocentric, protagonist, Nature, congested, destruction, realities.

This Paper is an attempt to study Anita Desai's novel *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* As an ecocentric novel where the novelist projects Earth and the elements of earth, both animate and inanimate, influencing the behaviour of the protagonist Sita. Desai has divided the novel into three parts - Part one: monsoon '67, Part two: winter '47 and Part 3: monsoon '67.

Ecocentrism is about one's reverence for the Earth. The theory of ecocentrism is closely related to the concept of Land Ethic evolved by the wildlife biologist and conservationist Aldo Leopold (1887-1948) in his book *A Sand County Almanac with Essays on Conservation from Round River* (1948). Leopold believed that the land ethic enlarged the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or to be collectively mentioned as the land.

In short, a land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow members, and also respect for the community as such. (Web)

Patrick Curry in his essay "Dark Green Or Deep (Ecocentric) Ethics" while reflecting on Leopold's concept of Land ethic makes a reference to the American philosopher Callicott in whose opinion "any distinction between 'inner' and 'outer' or 'self' and 'other' is strictly relative and never ultimate, except as a modernist fantasy: 'it is impossible to find a clear demarcation between oneself

and one's environment.... he world is, indeed, one's extended body' (1989: 113)." (Web)

Thus Ecocentrism can be termed as an ecological ethics or deep environmental ethics. In his essay titled "Ecocentrism" Mark Woods refers to the notion of moral extensionalism "that locates value directly in plants as well as animals" as "biocentric(life-centered)".(Web)

Many of Anita Desai's novels take Nature as backdrop and the protagonists, mostly women characters, who become alienated and go through identity crisis draw solace from Nature. They are conscious of the trees, flowers, and animals around them and often Desai uses the moods of nature as symbols to express the moods of her protagonists. The distress calls from the peacocks, match with the distress in Maya in *Cry the Peacock*. The sigh from the drooping leaves of the trees in her compound becomes the metaphor for the depressed mood of Bim in *Clear Light of Day* and in the novel *Fire on the Mountain* the bare garden in her house Carignano that is situated on a mountain ridge becomes the symbol for Nanda's aloofness and alienation. For the male protagonist, Adit, in Desai's *Bye-bye, Blackbird*, the lush green countryside of England intensifies his nostalgia and for Nirode and Monisha in *Voices in the City*. The city of Calcutta with its heavy monsoons, overflowing drains and the high level of sounds of traffic and rain make a stark contrast to the quiet and beautiful surroundings of the Himalayan village which is their hometown. In all these characters, the distress in

Nature seeps into their psyche and unconsciously this becomes an element in causing the identity crisis in them.

In the novel, *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Sita, the protagonist, shares a parallelism with the mythological character Sita of *Ramayana* in the aspect that both of them grew up without the care and protection of their real mothers. Sita of *Ramayana* was named so because she was found in a furrow in a field and so she was believed to be Mother Earth's daughter. However, Sita of Desai's novel does not enjoy the love, care of the foster mother as her counterpart does, and she spends a lonely childhood with only her brother Jivan to give her some company from whom she has heard the story of her mother who had abandoned them and had run away to Banaras. After her father's retirement from politics, the family moves into a house in a small fishing village Manori near Bombay and here Sita lives in the lap of nature enjoying the closeness of the earth and its elements. As a child, she used to wake up every day ready to receive the sights and sounds of the island:

When Sita rolled out of her bed and went out on the veranda in her short slip, her hair in a murky tumble, her eyes still blue with sleep, to see the white sea birds sparkle in the pastel sky and the fishing fleet already out on the mauve line of the horizon, a procession of brave white triangles riding the wind still sharp with the chill of the night...

She feels close to the sea, rocks, and breeze, trees, and animals become the motif of life for her. Her father whom she has always seen as a stranger, for whom she feels more fear than love has never been a companion to her.

He had met her with the sweetest chuckle and reached out his hand to chuck her chin. The hiss of the spurting wind, the rattle of those harsh leaves, had made her brush away his hand and rush up to the house, the lantern hysterically swinging. (73)

It is as though her reflexes are guided by the mood of nature. Sita watches her father's social work in the village with suspicion and she used to wonder what worth the simple uneducated villagers have seen in him.

Sita's love for nature eventually becomes an obsession in her after she is transplanted to the city life following the death of her father. The initial enthusiasm and fascination for the vibrant city life gradually gives way to poignant distress and frustration. Life confined within the four walls of the city affects Sita in three ways. Firstly, Sita feels suffocated and wants to free herself from the fetters that bind her to the limited space of a flat and the memory

of the space and freedom she had enjoyed in her childhood haunts her all the time. She wants to fly out to the openness of Manori with its sea breeze and the trees, her soul being deeply rooted to earth as a member of the land community.

Secondly, Sita is not used to the routine and discipline of a family and the routine ridden and disciplined family atmosphere in Raman's household though initially satiates her curiosity soon it is replaced by boredom. Her anxiety and frustration leads her to take up smoking.

Thirdly, Sita is averse to any kind of socializing. In her subconscious, she always remains a loner, the lonely child who was happy in the presence of nature. It is to avoid socializing that Sita forces Raman to stay separately away from his family. Whenever Raman's family or friends visit them, Sita gets irritated. In the tiny flat Sita will while away time sitting on the balcony looking at the sea smoking.

"But living by themselves was little better. People continued to come and be unacceptable to her. She took their insularity and complacency as well as the aggression and violence of others as affronts upon her own living nerves. She spent almost all her time on the balcony, smoking, looking out at sea" (45).

Even in her frustration, Sita finds comfort in looking at the sea just as she has been doing in her childhood days at Manori.

The anxiety and frustration that has been building over the years, takes a toll on Sita's attitude and appearance. As the years roll on Sita becomes the mother of four children and becomes a graying middle-aged woman, a vast change from the charming young woman whom Raman had married. All her bottled up anxiety and frustration is vented out during her fifth pregnancy and Sita exhibits neurotic behaviour. Sita's existential predicament at this time is triggered by some small incidents, seemingly trivial and unimportant for a normal person. Her feeling of insecurity makes her a hypersensitive woman who finds it difficult to put up with the trivialities of life. She thinks that her husband and children are being insensitive to her and it upsets her when she watches the destructive tendency in her children even though she knows that they are not doing it intentionally. When she sees her daughter Menaka destroying her own watercolour paintings, Sita considers it atrocious. When Menaka plucks the buds in the potted plant nurtured by Sita with great care, Sita thinks Menaka is insensitive,

"She watched disbelievingly as Menaka, telling her about a party she had been to, idly reached out her fingers

and crumbled a sheaf of new buds on the small potted plant she had been labouring to grow on the balcony" (41).

She gets worried when she observes the destructive tendency shown even by the little boy Karan while playing with his building blocks: "She winced and shrank, hearing those blocks crash. The creative impulses had no chance, against the overpowering desire to destroy" (41).

In her high-strung state Sita reacts vehemently when she sees a baby eagle being attacked by the crows in front of her flat:

With glee the crows whistled—*whee*; in ecstasy they waved their wings;*cr-ra-cr-ra*, they laughed and rasped as they whipped it with their blue-bottle wings and tore into it with their scimitar beaks. It rose weakly, tried to crawl into the shelter of the wall's shadow and its wings, leaf-red, scraped the concrete, then its head, gold-beaked, fell to one side. (35)

She tries to drive away the crows with the help of her children. The children get quite thrilled about their new role even though they do not quite understand the meaning of the action. For them it is just an everyday scene, which does not require any special attention. After their initial enthusiasm wanes, they forget about the incident. Menaka refers to the incident as another drama of her mother to embarrass the family. However, when Sita sees the feathers of the bird scattered over the ground the next day, she feels sad and dejected. The sarcastic comments made by her husband sadden her even more and she is inclined to think that all in her family are teamed up against her.

‘They made a good job of your eagle,’ said her husband, coming out with his morning cup of tea. ‘Look at the feathers sticking out of the crow’s beak,’ he laughed (37).

Her family members do not rightly understand Biocentric existentialist that Sita is, protesting and showing her righteous anger against the injustice to the land community. In all these actions, her extra-sensitive mind perceives vulnerability to natural existence, this intensifies her insecurity feelings, and thus eventually Sita slips into a neurotic state. She sees only violence and destruction around and decides not to bring her fifth baby into this chaotic world. It is at this mental state, that Sita makes the declaration that she does not want to have the baby and that she wants to keep it, "I mean I want to *keep* it – I don't want it to be born". (32) Raman is appalled by her emotional outburst. She also announces her decision to go to Manori and her explanation is that she is trying "to escape from the madness *here*, to a place where it might be possible to be sane again". (32) In her neurotic

condition, Sita is pursuing an illusory world where she wants to protect her unborn child from violence and destruction.

If reality were not to be borne, then illusion was the only alternative. She saw that island illusion as a refuge, a protection. It would hold the baby safely unborn, by magic. Then there would be the sea – it would wash the frenzy out of her, drown it. (91).

Psychologist Karen Horney speaks about the "idealized image" that a neurotic builds "from the materials of his own personal experiences, his earlier fancies" (*NHG* 22) as a defence tool. In her book *Our Inner Conflicts*, Horney says that the repressed aspects of the neurotic's personality and the painful inner conflicts are further concealed through the development of a glorious idealized image. The idealized image establishes unattainable standards that either bring about eventual defeat, or cause the sufferer to shrink from the acid test of reality. The idealized image often converts wishes into unrealistic claims, which supposedly entitle the sufferer to triumph and glory (*OIC* 96-114). For Sita, Manori becomes her idealized image. Vimala Rao makes this observation about Sita's obsession for the island: "Manori...concretizes the nostalgic memories of Sita's childhood. The island primarily exists in its full reality only in her mind. The island is no more than a projection of her inner psyche" (174).

Thus, Sita escapes to Manori, her ideal place to get out of her anxieties. She imagines that Manori is free from violence where she and her unborn baby will be safe. Charmazel Dutt comments on Sita's decision to escape to Manori: "She [Sita] might be trying to escape into an Utopian world, the island where her father had created a magic existence, cut off from the urban world, very secluded island Manori" (67). The journey to the magic island is in fact Sita's a journey in search of her real self, real identity, which she thinks, lay hidden in the island: "*Where Shall We Go This Summer?* is about two journeys, one undertaken to escape from immediate surroundings, another to move towards something in the future created out of the illusion we all hold of the past" (Dutt 67).

A few days after their arrival, when Sita finds that Menaka and Karan have started enjoying their stay on the island, she thinks that the island has retained its magic. However, it is only temporary. Soon she feels betrayed when Raman comes to fetch them after Menaka writes to him. Her ego is hurt by this betrayal.

Again Sita faces the clash of loyalties. One part of her disturbed self wants to stay on the island, and be independent. But when the arrival of her husband is

announced by Moses she too feels the excitement and relief. She wonders at the mixed feeling of conflicting emotions, grief and pleasure in her:

She feels one violent pulsation of grief inside her, like a white bird flying up with one strident scream, then plummeting down, thinking, 'It's all over –' and then a warm expansion of relief, of pleasure, of surprise – oh happy surprise!... how could the very mention of him arouse such a tumult of life and welcome. She felt it herself – unwillingly, unexpectedly – but she felt it. (118)

Only after Raman's arrival on the island does Sita realize how much she misses her other two children and she feels sorry for not thinking about them. However, her wounded ego cannot accept Menaka's betrayal. Raman tries to convince her of the necessity to go back to Bombay but Sita's hurt ego refuses to comply. At last, he gives up and she experiences her freedom.

She stood still, straddling the line where the water met the sand, clashed and separated, and felt herself released and freed ... Like the freed sea-bird at evening, she wheeled around and began to circle about and then dropped lower and lower towards her home. (136)

Sita's stream of consciousness filled with images from nature once again establishes her strong bondage to the earth and in the sea bird that flies towards her home at evening, she finds her own self. Finally, she is able to recall the verse she has been pursuing for long:

The wild young heifer, glancing distraught,

With a strange, new knocking of life at her side  
Runs seeking loneliness.

The little grain draws down the earth, to hide  
Nay, even the slumberous egg as it labours  
Under the shell

Patiently to divide and sub-divide,

Asks to be hidden, and wishes nothing to tell. (137)

Sita draws her philosophy in life from nature and she realizes that the heifer, the grain, and the slumberous egg are her parallels in life. The newfound meaning of these lines gives her new hope to bridge the great gap between the two of them. Now she is free to make her own decisions and she decides to follow her husband's footsteps. When Raman offers to leave his factory in Bombay and start a new life on the island that wins him over to her completely. She is moved by his care for her and she no longer feels abandoned and insecure. The magic of the island has worked finally and it is on the island

that Sita learns the truth about her real self. When she allows him to triumph over her, she still wonders which of her selves, the one who loves the island or the other one who has accepted the routine life on the mainland, is her real self. She willingly comes out of her illusion and accepts the reality. Vimala Rao's observation on Sita's final reconciliation goes like this: "Sita learns to temper her exotic and mysterious memories of her childhood island by reconciling them with the present actuality of a dilapidated and run-down life that she now finds there. She learns that no man is an island. She sheds her obsession with isolation and learns to connect..." (176).

Sita of *Ramayana* was exiled by Rama and he deserted her but her namesake in the novel has chosen a self-imposed exile. However, her caring husband Raman is able to convince her of his love for her with his patience and persistence and takes her back with him to the mainland. Atma Ram in his article "A View of *Where Shall We Go This Summer?*" quotes from his interview with Desai, her views on the book: "I wanted the book to follow the pattern of the monsoon together darkly and threateningly, to pour down wildly and passionately, then withdraw quietly and calmly" (97-98). In Mani Meitei's opinion, the novel "presents a deep crisis of identity in the modern world, a crisis which has become a major theme of modern Indian-English fiction" (41).

*Where Shall We Go This Summer?* Clearly depicts Sita's ecocentric, more precisely, her biocentric perspectives, and her genuine concern for the deterioration of moral sensitivity among the urban population in India. Desai through this novel is making Sita her mouthpiece – perhaps unconsciously- in support of the concept of the Land ethic and is establishing the role of ecocentrism in resolving Sita's existential predicament.

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## RESILIENT VOICES: CULTURAL AND POLITICAL RESISTANCE OF FISHERFOLK IN JOE D' CRUZ AAZHI CHOOZH ULAGU AND VANNA NILAVAN'S BY THE SEA

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### Abstract

Culture, which indicates a particular way of life of people, is used consciously or unconsciously to resist or challenge the dominant social and political structure. Conflicts in culture are one of the main reasons for many rebellions and revolutions in many parts of the world. Social theorist Antonio Gramsci observes culture as one of the important components in challenging the power structure of the political society and the values of civil society. In one of his theoretical concepts "WAR OF POSITION" he propounds culture as a tool which resists cultural hegemony and has the ability to transform the lives of people and shape their world as imagined by them. This paper, having this concept 'war of position' as analytical framework and employing Oiko poetic theory which establishes the relationship between humans and the non humans examines two socio realistic novels AAZHI CHOOZH ULAGU\* and BY THE SEA. These two novels AAZHI CHOOZH ULAGU\* Tamil novel by Joe d'Cruz winner of Sahitya Academy award and BY THE SEA –English translation of Vanna Nilavan's Kadalpurathil which portray the trauma, trouble and turmoil faced by fishermen draw their materials from the life of people of Neythal landscape(one of the five landscapes called Thinai in Tamil Literature) fishermen community called 'parathavar' who populate the coastal village and interweaves the life of this often neglected community both on sea and shore .The novelists recover the drowning voice of the fisher folk who call on the shore people who are oblivious to the sufferings and struggle of fellow citizens. The novelists problematise the basic issues like resource degradation, social marginalisation, constraints associated with poverty, exploitation, discrimination and inner conflict between the traditional values and modern life which are uniquely attached to the particular landscape Neythal. By employing nativistic approach by creating their own narratives and by using the literary expressions of their community, the authors lay claim on the whole community- which is hitherto deprived of their social status and tried to traverse the community of one particular region into the world. Broadly this paper is an attempt to locate both the aforementioned novels in the interstices of the hidden power which is present in various institutions and cultural resistance of oppressed minorities to explicate how the authors assert the value of their own native heritage and instruct the value of human rights in our globalised world where human rights are violated under the guise of development.

"We belong nowhere. We sail unanchored on troubled seas. We may never be allowed ashore. Our sorrows will never be sad enough. Our joys never happy enough. Our dreams never big enough. Our lives never important enough. To matter"

Arundhathi Roy, *The God of Small things*

Culture, which indicates a particular way of life of people, is used consciously or unconsciously to resist or challenge the dominant social and political structure. Conflicts in culture are one of the main reasons for many rebellions and revolutions in many parts of the world. Social theorist Antonio Gramsci observes culture as one of the important components in challenging the power structure of the political society and the values of civil society. He has propounded two methods to counter hegemony: "War of maneuver" and "War of position". War of maneuver involves the employment of armed forces, implementing legal norms and other coercive measures of the state to have control and social order in the society. "War of position" as described by Gramsci, "is resistance to

domination with culture, rather than physical might as its foundation" (Gramsci 2007:168). Crehan further describes that for Gramsci culture is a tool which resists hegemony and has the ability to transform the lives of people as desired by them, "it shapes their ability to imagine how it might be changed and whether they see such changes feasible or desirable".(2002:71)

This paper, having this concept 'war of position' as analytical framework and employing Nirmal Selvamony's Oiko poetic theory- which establishes the relationship between humans and the non humans, examines two socio realistic novels AAZHI CHOOZH ULAGU\*(OCEAN RINGED WORLD) and BY THE SEA. These two novels AAZHI CHOOZH ULAGU Tamil novel by Joe d'Cruz winner

of Sahithya Academy award and *BY THE SEA* –English translation of Vanna Nilavan's *Kadalpurathil* which portray the trauma, trouble and turmoil faced by fishermen draw their materials from the life of people of *Neythal* landscape (one of the five landscapes called *Thinai* in Tamil Literature) fishermen community called '*parathavar*' who populate the coastal village and interweaves the life of this often neglected community both on sea and shore.

Joe D'Cruz in his novel *AZHI CHOOZH ULAGU* traces the history of his ancestors who have inhabited the coastal village on the shores of Gulf of Mannar, near Tuticorin which is known for its rich maritime resources and pearl fishing in southern Tamil Nadu. He documents the destiny of his own fishing community both on shore and offshore that spans across five decades 1935-1985. The novel begins with three fishermen of three different generations who were stranded in the mid sea in 1983 while on their regular fishing expedition. While anchoring to moor the catamaran, the senior fishermen Godhra was swept away by a rogue wave and the other two, Siluvai – the younger one and his guardian Susai – the middle aged person in their effort to save Godhra – too lost in the seas. As days pass, these three men have lost their hope of survival. The battle for their life is narrated in sections that are interwoven with the struggles faced by the coastal people. This unpredictable nature of the sea makes the life of the seafarers highly uncertain. This uncertainty and insecurity in their lives gives birth to various conflicts: conventional methodologies versus unconventional methodologies, traditional versus modern, sustenance versus starvation which set the tone of both the novels.

Vannanilavan in *By the Sea* captures the failed love story between Philomy Kutty and Samidas along with the pains, pangs and pleasures of *parathavas* – who breathe the briny air of the same locale near Tuticorin – with stunning poignancy. The conversation between son Sebastin and his father Cruz in the opening scene of *By the Sea* brings out the existing tension between the ideologies of two different generations. Sebastin who is a teacher in the nearby town Udangudi wants his parents and sister Philomy to come and stay with him and spend their remaining life peacefully without struggling on sea where the everyday catch is not assured and the risk involved is also high. While his mother wants to go with her son, Cruz and Philomy do not want to leave their dwelling. Cruz's vehement rejection that,

"I shall never come away from this Manalpattur village. This Michael Adiyani's body has to be buried in the church yard here. So long as there is life in this body, I

will ride out to sea on my boat and cast my net. The boat means everything to me" (13) communicates his resistance to snap his deeply rooted ties with his place and profession which are his identity.

His refusal to sell his ancestral properties thatched hut and boat conveys that they are not some inanimate objects made of mud and wood but they are his life which has seen his ups and downs. Giving life and soul to inanimate objects signifies an integrated oikos that bonds human beings, nature, culture and the sacred. These two novelists besides narrating the life of the coastal people also describe the flora, fauna and other objects associated with that locale that includes natural, cultural and the sacred. If palm trees and cormorants stand for natural, catamaran and dry fish stand for culture. Besides connecting with nature and culture, the characters unite with the sacred '*kadalammai*,' mother Sea who loves, cares and protects her sons and daughter. In many cultures nature is always described using feminine and motherly terms as both of them suffer the pain of giving birth and caring.

The vast expanse of sea besides forming the background of the entire narration becomes one of the characters in both the novels. The mighty sea comforts them and consoles them. Whenever Philomy felt lonely and sad the relentless roar of the waves gave her the much needed solace,

"how many forms it assumed and how many images! The sea that brought the fishing boats to the shore at dawn, the sea that swept up shells and cowries along with the white surf for the children of the *paraikudi*; the sea at whose front she had waited as a child with Akka Amalorpovam" (2007:26)

Sea is equated with "*Marial* and *Yesu* whom they worshipped" (17), compared with mother earth- symbol of patience and elevated to the level of Goddess who is a part of this nature. In *Aazhi Choozh Ulagu* when Godhra in one of his whale hunting expeditions lamented that they are dying on the sea, Thommandurai his senior companion asked him not to speak like that as,

"this sea is equivalent to mother. Not an ordinary mother, Mother Kumari. Even in this *Sirraparru* whom do you think is guarding us? She is the one. She is the guarding deity for the entire coast. She guards her sons who sail on the sea. For ages she is the one who fed us. Has she said no on any day? She might be angry on some days. But we need to adjust all this. By giving different varieties of fish on different seasons she takes care of our daily bread" (37: trans.mine)

Elevating her to mother and guarding deity asserts the popular indigenous notion that natural objects like river, seas, stones rocks etc. too similar to humans have souls and consciousness. As Chief Sealath's asserts,

"Even the rocks that seems to lie dumb as they swelter in the sun along the silent seashore in solemn grandeur thrill with memories of past events connected with the fate of my people, and the very dust under your feet responds more lovingly to our footsteps than to yours, because it is the ashes of our ancestors, and our bare feet are conscious of the sympathetic touch, for the soil is rich with the life of our kindred".

Worshipping other forms is against the belief of their adapted religion Christianity, which is monotheistic. Though church has barred these people from visiting other temples or taking part in other religious festivals, the fisher folks secretly visited Hindu temples and offered their prayers at times of their distress. Thommandurai's conversation with Manradyar another fisherman in *AAZHI CHOOZH ULAGU* that,

"see, if you ask me, I'll say there is nothing wrong. Bible has come only recently. Before that our ancestors worshipped only these deities, Manradi. Whom do you think is Kumari Amman. *Yellei* She is *parathi*. Our guardian spirit....for years we worshipped her. Now left her in the lurch after conversion. *Yellei* we take our oath in her name. (77 trans.mine)

These bring to the fore the clash between the old belief versus new order in the minds of these people. Though the segue seems to be smooth, they are not able to imbibe the spirit of Christianity as it is difficult for them to completely disconnect themselves from their cultural past, their traditional customs and habits which they have been following since time immemorial.

Joe D'Cruz traces the history of conversion in this particular area. The entire coastal area in southern part of Tamil Nadu from Ramanathapuram to Kanyakumari was converted to Christianity in the 15<sup>th</sup> century by Portuguese who helped them in their fight against Muslims. Though they had changed their religion they did not change their traditional customs and way of worshipping in the temples. Then Francis Xavier who came there settled with them and through his preaching and service he completely brought them under the fold of Christianity. The author eulogises the good deeds of Francis Xavier and other pastors to the upliftment of this parish. At the same time he also points out how certain pastors politically exploit these illiterate fishers for their own personal benefits. The villagers were

silently fuming against the church for collecting money in different forms for different reasons from the poor people. "In the name of constructing temples they make their families and paramours wealthy" (197 trans. Mine). They cannot openly defy the church as it is the established order which is the part of the civil society through which hegemony is operated. According to Gramsci civil society, "is best described not as the sphere of freedom, but of hegemony" (Buttigieg, 1995:6)

It is a paradox that people who worship nature also exploit her resources. The fishing community whose activities were adapted to the coastal ecosystem was an eco society till the arrival mechanised boats. In the case of fisheries, the introduction of modern technologies like mechanised boats have started to displace the traditional fishing methods and pushed the traditional fisherman to the margins. It has altered the socio-economic conditions of the fisher folk. As fish has become an important commercial commodity it has become an industry.

"A major change that a century of fisheries development has brought about is a radical transformation of a traditional subsistence – based, livelihood activity into a corporate, commercial, business venture where risks are outweighed by profit, which inevitably leads to over exploitation". (qtd. Gupta, Charu 2008:32)

The growing demand for fish has pushed the fishermen to practise unsustainable methods which threaten the maritime resources.

In *AAZHI CHOOZH ULAGU* the author describes about prawn fishing using mechanised boats. Prawns were sighted only in late 1930's in this region. It was not caught as there were no buyers. Only at the beginning of 1970's when the export companies started to purchase prawns the fishermen started fishing prawns. Its demand grew high with that price also. Aamanthurai also prospered. Those who had money became the agents of prawns and rotation of money was there. Only near Aamanthurai and Periyathurai prawns were found in large quantities as they came there for spawning. Since these places were suitably located for fishing heavy competition prevailed among the boats to haul the maximum. They came from Cape Comorin and Tuticorin in mechanised boats to fish in this place. As access to fish is contested coast lines are also contested. Skirmishes ensued to protect their region. Though Government had barred their entries they defied the orders. Susai's complaint to Godhra Pilli that, "what will be left for us if they overfish like this. (486: trans.) This



proves how the lives of small scale fishermen have been reduced to rubble by the mechanised trawlers.

Susan and Godhra pointed out the difference between the traditional nets and modern nets. Traditional nets which are mostly handmade used fibre like material and when it is cast they stand firmly like wall in the sea without disturbing spawning, whereas the modern nets which are made of nylon with bag erodes the mud as a result of which other breeds of fish, fry and its eggs are destroyed. Susan and Godhra felt it was their responsibility to protect the ecosystem as they have to sustain the catch whereas fishermen in mechanised boat most of whom were labourers were not bothered about that. They would not mind killing ten thousand fry to catch ten big fish as, "For them it's a business. For us it's life". (487). This signifies the existence of nexus between poverty and environment. As a result of poverty they indulge in resource exploitation which results in the depletion of fish – thus contributing to poverty.

In *By the Sea* Vannanilavan through Cruz and Issac exposes the complete collapse of traditional fisheries due to industrialisation of fisheries which has pushed the fishers into quagmire of poverty and periphery. Cruz, traditional fisherman and his neighbour Issac a launch owner who always tortured his wife. Issac stands for hierarchical oikos as he is the oppressor of both woman and nature. Eco feminists are of the view that women and nature have a shared history of exploitation and domination in this patriarchal world. Cruz comments, "All is lost. Ever since the launches arrived at these shore, the boats lost their livelihood and *paraiyan* his peace of mind". (2008:40) reveal the grim situation prevailing in the village. The launches reached shore with their bellies full whereas for native boats the catch was small. Fishing was not allowed on important and festival days. Once when the trawlers including Issac tried to break this customary practise on Christmas day, Pavulu patta, an old man counselled the *pariyars* not to be greedy as it will ruin their lives. The fight between the two launch owners Rossario and Issac over Issac's lewd remarks against Rosario's wife took an ugly turn when Rossario set fire to Issac's launch. On seeing his dreams, his identity and wealth going up on in flames, Issac in a fit of rage murdered Rosario and went insane.

As days passed the country fishers found it increasingly difficult to run their everyday life as the catch was less. "Nobody could make out whether those confounded machines roved the sea in order to brighten their lives or if they merely roared to wreck their lives." (104). The impoverished fishermen borrowed heavy

amount from the *Sayibus* – the money lenders. As they were not able to repay it they borrowed again and again. *Sayibus* lent money after obtaining their signatures in a blank paper. Instead of interest the fishers had to sell half or quarter of their daily catch to these money lenders at a very low price fixed by the *Sayibus*. They were not able to resist this economic exploitation as they were scared that they would not get credits. They are trapped in a situation which is similar to bonded labour. This grim spectre describes how the industrialisation of fisheries has lead to class exploitation – where the higher authorities extract excessive labour and surplus money. This unbalanced trade between fishers and fish buyers have pushed the fisher folk to the margins.

Capital and interest swallowed them. Unable to clear their debts some families sold all their properties and moved to nearby towns. Cruz too had borrowed heavily from *tharaganar*. Since he was not able to repay his debts, he decided to sell his ancestral properties hut and boat which he refused earlier, for his survival and move to Udangudi. Cruz felt guilty after selling his hut and boat. He thought that he had committed a mistake. He went to the usual place where the boat was moored to have a look. He caressed the boat like his child as it had shared all his grief and joys with him. It was a living testimony to the lives of the *paravars*. "The boat knew everything, but kept quiet considering the well – being of the owners". (93) Cruz stumbled and fell on the seashore losing his consciousness. This painful partition portrays how boats play an integral part in the lives of *paravars* which signify integrated oikos-that non humans too have a spirit. This gloomy situation throws light on the biasedly framed marine fishing policies which do not address the grievance of the traditional fisher folk instead focused on maximising the profit which benefitted the few. In Coastal Regulation Zone notification 2011 they note

"that while resource – intensive activities carried out mainly by the state and big corporate players have gone from prohibition to regulation to promotion in the last 25 years, the state's engagement with the resource –based communities has moved from engagement to consultation to finally, their alienation now"(Sekhsaria 2017 p.6)

When Cruz regained his consciousness he had completely lost all his past memories. Cruz is a man of integrity whereas Issac symbolises materialism and consumerism. Capitalism and consumerism lead to class exploitation which implies anarchic oikos –oikos that creates commotion and confusion. Displacements to other

urban centre due to poverty and disconnection with their fishing environment have resulted in loss of identity. Both Cruz and Issac have forgotten their identities once they have lost their boats. The loss alienated them from the fishing environment. Fish is everything to fishermen. Its presence on sea gives them confidence which in turn makes them feel powerful. If there is no fish he feels incapable. As Robson and Nayak summarizes,

“with members leaving fishing and many heading to regional urban centres, a process of cultural changes weakening the traditional notion of a fisher community as defined by caste and occupational identity. The pride felt by individuals who belonged to the fisher community has been replaced by a deep sense of alienation, where occupationally displaced fishers do not feel they belong to either world.”

The fishermen not only battle against the odd sea but also against hidden power which is present in various institutions to preserve their cultural identity, political identity and ecological identity. The authors have reposed their faith in their resilient younger generation Siluvai –who survived the scare of sea when other two senior fishermen lost their lives- in Aazhi Choozh Ulagu and Philomi in *By The Sea* -who came out of her depression due to her love failure- to challenge the factors that contribute poverty and to reinforce ecological, social and political resilience.

By employing nativistic approach by creating their own narratives and by using the literary expressions of their community, the authors lay claim on the whole community- which is hitherto deprived of their social status and tried to traverse the community of one particular region into the world. By problematizing the basic issues like resource degradation, social marginalisation, constraints associated with poverty, exploitation, discrimination and inner conflict between the traditional values and modern life which are

uniquely attached to the particular landscape *Neythal*, the authors assert the value of their own native heritage and call upon the shore people who are oblivious to the sufferings of fellow human beings.

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## THE TURN OF THE TIDE: A PORTRAYAL OF THE DETERMINING ROLE PLAYED BY NATURE IN THE LIVES OF THE CHARACTERS IN THE NOVEL THE HUNGRY TIDE

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### Abstract

*The novel The Hungry Tide by Amitav Ghosh places nature in the forefront and examines the effects nature has on the lives of the inhabitants of the Sunderbans. The intention of this paper is to examine the way nature and ecology influences the lives of people. In the novel, there are four major characters. They are Kanai, Piya, Fokir and Nirmal. All of the four characters are different. Kanai is a wealthy translator who lands in the Sunderbans to research the papers left behind by Nirmal. Piya, an Indian-American student, on the other hand, comes to the Sunderbans to research about the Irrawaddy dolphins. Similarly Fokir is a local fisherman and Nirmal Kanai's uncle figures only in the past. However, despite the differences in all of these characters, nature exerts an influence on all of these characters and changes the course of their life. This paper intends to study in detail about how the lives of the characters are altered by the changes in the environment of the Sunderbans. The paper also aims to look at the way Amitav Ghosh portrays nature. Nature here is no longer the pleasant setting that inspires the characters. It is calamitous. He throws light on the uncertain life of the people in the Sunderbans, who are forever at the mercy of the natural forces. Though Amitav Ghosh sees nature in both its positive and negative aspects, he does not fail to be an advocate of nature. At the end, he portrays the characters as having imbibed the goodness of nature. In Piya's free spirit and Fokir's humility, one sees the lessons learnt from nature. Nature is seen as equipping the people with immense strength. There is a beauty about the simplistic life led by Fokir. Thus, the novel The Hungry Tide portrays nature in a very different way. The fact that Amitav Ghosh has chosen to write on the less known about forest of our country, makes him a writer of nature and ecology.*

**Keywords:** Ecocentrism, Deep ecology, Anthropocentrism, Environmental writer

For aeons, writers have used nature as a backdrop for their stories. In most cases it served the purpose to heighten the passion involved in the plot, like the romance dramas. In other cases, it was just there to teach the beauty of life, like in the romantic age poetry, where nature breathed life into humans by becoming a symbol of divinity. In all of these, nature was always portrayed as an ever good force with a God – like quality conferred on it. However, in the recent writings, there seems to be a huge change in the portrayal of nature.

Writers of today have always made it mandatory to explore the threats to nature and have been proposing ways to safeguard it. One such writer is Amitav Ghosh, who has always endeavoured to bring to light the importance of nature. His novel *The Hungry Tide* elaborates on the power of nature. The novel seems to inform us that humans are forever in awe of the formidable nature. The novel debunks anthropocentrism and introduces ecocentrism in its place.

Ecocentrism denies the presence of divisions between nature and humans. The theory also exalts nature and portrays it as possessing greater values than humans.

The novel *The Hungry Tide* supports the claims of this theory as nature is seen to constantly educate the novel's characters on the values of life. At the end of the novel, every character turns into a new and different being, which has learnt the lessons of nature. The theory also portrays nature as a complex system which is more integrated and beautiful; this view of ecocentrism is exemplified in the novel as the Sunderbans are projected as a place where many wonderful plants and animals are found.

The theory that the paper intends to use is the Deep ecology theory. Deep ecology theory is an environment philosophy that believes that the non-human living beings have an inherent value. This theory does not support the claim that nature's value is determined by its use to humans. Thereby the theory moves the focus from anthropocentrism to ecocentrism.

To see how the theory applies to the novel *The Hungry Tide* is essential to understand the portrayal of nature by Amitav Ghosh. The novel places nature in equal significance with human lives. The importance given to the Sunderbans is seen in the way Ghosh has named the parts

of his novel. He has named the first part as *The Ebb* and the second part as *The Flood*.

The fact that Amitav Ghosh has chosen to portray the importance of an alienated cluster of islands, which is prone to the debilitating effects of nature is also evidence to the importance he gives to nature. Sunderbans, for many has always existed as a faraway mystical land given form only in maps. Amitav Ghosh has taken up the noble task of explaining what the Sunderbans are. All throughout the novel the importance of the Sunderbans is evident. It is the backwaters of the Sunderbans that draw Piyali Roy, an Indian-American scientist to research on the Irrawaddy dolphins.

Ghosh has not only portrayed the goodness of nature but also elaborated on the destruction nature could wreck in the face of unnecessary human intervention. The land which is a flood zone causes many people to migrate. It also serves as a conflict zone, where animals encounter humans often. Thus the land comes across as the place where nature's power is mighty and humans live forever in the mercy of nature.

When it comes to the influence nature has on the lives of the character, one can say that almost all the characters have their life influenced by the force of nature. At first, it is Piya. The first positive influence of nature in her life draws her to the Sunderbans. It is the interest in nature that facilitates her friendship with Fokir. Throughout the entire novel, nature seems to be the driving force in all of Piya's actions. In a similar way, Fokir's life is one dictated by nature. He lives a simple life ordained by nature. However, the very power of nature causes his death, when he unwittingly sets foot in the way of nature. The disturbing death of Fokir is used to show what a vengeful beauty nature is. The flood, storm and wild animals are all part of the destroying side of nature.

However, Ghosh also uses nature to show the secondary status of humans. By informing us of the power of nature, he warns of the consequences of meddling with nature. He also urges the readers to take to conservation of nature and engage in ways to enhance co-existence with nature.

In fact, the novel *The Hungry Tide* can be viewed as an account on the results of not forging a harmonious

relationship with nature. Amitav Ghosh has in fact universalized the conflict between humans and nature in the Sunderbans. The novel urges us to respect nature by portraying it in its mighty form. Nature according to the novel is not the gentle breeze that the romantics idealized but a storm that can cause havoc.

Amitav Ghosh has emerged as a writer of environment in this novel. He successfully describes the beauty of the Sunderbans to us. He informs of the facts that most of us are unaware of. It is a given that not many people are not aware of the Irrawaddy dolphins and the beautiful backwaters of the Sunderbans. He tells us more about the place, which was recognized as a World heritage site by UNESCO. In a world of novels, that centre mostly on love and the pain inflicted by it, Ghosh's novel is refreshingly new. It takes ones on a trip through the Sunderbans. Thus Amitav Ghosh can be rightly called an environmental writer. One should laud Amitav Ghosh for the meticulous research on the Sunderbans that has helped him to pen down a pulsating novel.

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## RE-READING JIM CORBETT'S MY INDIA FROM AN ECO-CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

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### Abstract

*Man's relationship with nature in the recent time has been one of conflict and chaos. It is time for everyone to have concern about environment and return to nature from further degradation. This paper will examine the challenging human-nature relationships that plays out in Jim Corbett's My India. The issues that are explored in this paper include legacies of colonialism, racism and postcolonial ecocriticism. The colonizer while colonizing the people colonizes the land and its culture. They have exploited the nature and its resources for their own economic profits. They make rules to change the human settlement patterns and dissolve the traditional means of using the land. They consider themselves as superior and treat the natives as inferior. Jim Corbett considered by many, as a naturalist and protector of nature, whose works is examined from the postcolonial ecocritical perspective. The service that he has done to the people of the region while protecting and safeguarding can be questioned. His act of killing the man-eaters will also be examined.*

**Keywords:** ecocriticism, postcolonial theory, anthropocentric

Ecocriticism is a term, which has been coined by combining 'criticism' with a shortened form of 'ecology' in the late 1970's. This term designates the critical writings, which explore the relations between literature and the biological and the physical environment. Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnection between nature and culture, and more specifically, the cultural artefacts of language and literature.

Corbett's memoir *My India* demonstrates the interrelationship between man and environment. The memoir contains vivid and pictorial description of the forest, villages, birds, tigers and leopards. This is because of his association with the region where he works as a hunter and tracker during which he hunted a large number of man-eating tigers and leopards. The stories of this memoir are set in Nainital and Mokameh Ghat of the Himalayan region. The environment in the form of plants, animals and geographical places are significant actors in the development of the plot. Nature is a pervasive presence in Corbett's work. He depicts the beautiful landscape of Nainital and Mokameh Ghat where he describes the locale as,

"The road is steep, but if you are interested in birds, trees, and flowers you will not mind the three-mile climb and if you arrive at the top thirsty, as the three sages did, I will show you a crystal-clear spring of cold water to quench your thirst" (3-4).

Re-reading of *My India* from the ecocritical perspective reveals the prejudices and imperialistic attitude

of Jim Corbett as a white man. It became a myth to look Corbett as a pioneering conservationist and protector of the weak and poor Indians. This reading of him is quite misleading. He has killed tigers, leopards and other valuable wild animals for fun and as a competition between the colonizers to show the colonized people that how strong and powerful they are. The natives have mistaken his identity as a colonizer and instead seen him as a protector of the villagers. Even though the colonizers are seemed to be the preserver and conservator of the natural resources, but in reality they have commercially exploited the nature, natural resources and the people (used as manual labourers). Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin in *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* observe the approach initiated by the Europeans to conserve the environment, which was previously exploited by them:

While European instrumentalist attitudes towards the environment and the corporate exploitation of land continue, counter-moves – themselves often inspired by western attitudinal changes – have had catastrophic results for people violently co-opted into western systems and worldviews. The environmental historian Richard Grove has provocatively contended that it was in colonised areas of the world that European naturalists, scientists and administrators first apprehended the need for conservation measures and, in recognising the finite amount of flora and fauna at their disposal, began to implement strategies of preservation. Whether one agrees or not with Grove's

hypothesis, it is certainly the case that as long-established scientific hierarchies and 'predator-prey' models of relationships in nature came increasingly to be challenged during the twentieth century, pressure to preserve non-human animal and plant species grew with it. (186)

The colonizer who came to colonize the country, not only colonized people but they also colonized the land and its resources. In the story "Budhu", the extraction of coal from India and exporting to other countries is seen. The natives are indulged in the work where Corbett says, "I had some two hundred men and women trans-shipping coal at that time, for the coal traffic was heavy as it always was in the summer. India was an exporting country in those days..." (152). The works that they are doing are very difficult but due to extreme poverty they are forced to do the manual labours.

Ramachandra Guha in his book entitled *The Unquiet Woods: Ecological Change and Peasant Resistance in the Himalaya* draws out the fact that the British rule in India has a negative impact on the environment of the Himalayan region. He says:

However, in Uttarakhand by far the most important consequence of colonial rule was the system of commercial forestry it introduced. Yet the conflict between state forestry and peasantry, while perhaps at its most intense in Uttarakhand, was played out (with variations) in other forest regions of the subcontinent as well. Its origins were as much ideological as economic: for peasant use and state use were embedded in very different understandings of the social role of the forests. (xiii)

The colonizers extract timbers from jungles and export to other foreign countries. Not only this they also import animals skin, claws for decorations. On the contrary, the British government prohibits the free movement of the villagers in the forest where they earlier relied on the forests for their livelihood. They set up rules and regulations for the indigenous people to prohibit them from entering those 'protected areas'. But the colonizers can move freely without any restrictions and they can even do hunting and poaching if they wish to do. This result in making the villagers to suffer more and more which is evident in the story "The Brothers" where Corbett writes:

The bamboos in Kaladhungi grow in the Government Reserved Forests, and we who cultivate land near the Reserved Forests are permitted to cut a certain number each year for our personal use. But people who use the bamboos for commercial purposes have to take out licence from the forest guard of the area, paying two annas

per head load, and a small consideration to the forest guard for his trouble in filling the licence. (83)

Corbett has dedicated this memoir to the poor of India and he has titled the work as *My India*. He wants to create the sense of belonging to the country, which he has come to colonize but one will come across the dichotomy that exists between the imperialist and the other. This kind of feeling can be seen from the poem "House and Land" by Allen Curnow. Just like the lady in the poem who thinks that she does not belong there and feels alienated in the foreign land, the same feeling is there in Corbett while hiding under the mask to show the readers that he is like any other Indian. He fools the villagers while hiding his imperialistic stance. He depicts shooting of man-eaters as a responsibility, which is a protective task where he has undertaken to save the helpless, panic-stricken villagers and their livestock.

Ecocritical perspective plays an important role in postcolonial writings. There is a close connection between colonialism and environmental degradation. It is important to look at colonial literature through the prism of ecocriticism to strengthen his claim of superiority over the natives. Postcolonial criticism often risks taking an anthropocentric stance, relegating nature to an unmoving, secondary position that does not need any a platform of expression. One forgets that dynamic nature is the source and means of human existence and hence it needs to be kept at the forefront while discussing issues that affect human beings. In the Introduction to the first part of the book, *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment*, Pablo Mukherjee examines that postcolonial studies "cannot but consider the complex interplay of environmental categories such as water, land, energy, habitat, migration with political or cultural categories such as state, society, conflict, literature..."(2). This is evident in this memoir in one of the stories which entitled "Kunwar Singh", Corbett narrates an incident where they set fire of the grasses just for the sake of rivalry in which they are trying to kill a boar. They do not value the wild life instead; they are more concerned about themselves. This shows that animals are reduced to a mere object of pleasure.

Val Plumwood in *Environmental Culture: The Ecological Crisis of Reason* studies that "Dominant western culture is androcentric, eurocentric and ethnocentric, as well as anthropocentric (101). This is true in the context of the story "Sultana: India's Robin Hood". Sultana has been named as a criminal because "Sultana was a member of the Bhamu criminal tribe" (98). The British has introduced an act known as The Criminal Tribes Act, 1871 where they

classified certain tribal communities of India as criminal tribe. Sultana, the dacoit has been hunted by the policeman Freddie Young in the name of bringing justice. Corbett has assisted the policeman for the hunt. The colonizers are responsible for tribal community becoming criminals. These people that had done earlier shifting cultivation for livelihood and hunting animals for survival are forced to stop because of the fencing that are put up by the colonizers. This has forbidden the tribes from this nomadic culture and naturally becoming criminals and commits petty crimes and for this, the entire tribal communities are branded and named as criminal tribe which is very unfair and injustice done to the tribal communities. It is not the entire tribe who are criminals, but only a few of them are criminals.

Plumwood talks that "racial supremacist version, it is inferior and 'barbarian' others who are closer to nature, an earlier and more primitive stage of our own rational civilisation, who receive only benefits when more advanced masters of reason, the colonisers, come to take away their land to put it to proper, rational use" (21) which is validated in the story "The Brothers". Corbett depicts an incident when the two untouchable brothers, basket makers Narwa and Haria go to obtain a licence to cut two head loads of bamboos from the forest guard. Narwa who steps into the sleeping tiger is severely mauled. Corbett's description of how Haria fights with the tiger to save Narwa's life and how he carries Narwa with great courage and strength reflects Corbett's imperialist belief of supremacy over the natives where he never imagines a native man can fight against a tiger.

In *Postcolonial Ecocriticism* by Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin argues that there is a fundamental difference in mentality between the English and the natives:

English attitudes to the social and cultural roles of hunting also eroded potential commonality. Because Indian women were the agriculturalists, Indian men were perceived as lazy, energised only by the hunt. In English eyes, hunting was a pastime, an upper-class social ritual, not a survival necessity. And, ironically, it was this upper-class model that came most readily to mind" (10).

In the story "The Queen of the Village", Corbett's Eurocentric attitude is seen. He has narrated the incident where a tiger has killed two of the villagers and he has portrayed the villagers as helpless and cannot fight themselves against the tiger. His stance of superiority complex is seen when he tries to show that he only can protect the villagers. It is the wrong notion of the colonizers

who thinks that the hill people who stay closed with nature are foolish and meek while the Europeans are smarter and they only can protector these people. They do not know how to react rather than asking help from an English to protect their lives. However, there is a need to protect and conserve the natural resources from further exploitation. Corbett has achieved in depicting the beautiful Himalayan landscape, which is sometimes alien to him because of his different belonging to different country. Ecocriticism and postcolonial studies are interrelated and inseparable and the effects of the colonialism on the environment of the colonized countries are important to take into consideration. It is important to know how Corbett portrays animals in his memoir and what relationship exists between animals and human in it. Corbett the hero hunter is the saviour hero for the innocent villagers. Though Corbett tries to show that he killed the wild animals to protect and defend the innocent villagers from the man-eaters that are troubling the villagers, his predominant anthropomorphic view is seen. The superiority complex of the imperialistic above all other human beings, animals and plants are depicted in this memoir.

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## ECOLOGY VS ECOBUSINESS: A STUDY OF JEAN GIRAUDOUX'S PLAY THE MADWOMAN OF THE CHAILLOT

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### Abstract

*Ecology and Ecocriticism with the prefix 'eco' gain its root from the Greek word 'oikos', meaning house. The terms are interweaved with literature. Nature had a pivotal position in literature from ancient days till the current jet age. The pastoral settings rendering aesthetic appeal, the wilderness triggering sensuousness and the pristine landscape infusing spirituality provided fodder for the writer's hunger. The personification of Earth as mother is expressed in Greek literature, where Earth is called Gaia, the Mother Goddess. This wisdom propagates the need to improve nature. Human race in its pursuit of economic progress has devoured the natural resources, destroyed wildlife and exploited the ecosystem. Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher proposed the theory of "deep ecology", which explains Earth as the pinnacle of ecosystem. There is a never-ending dispute between the economic betterment and the environmental hazard. The mission to prevent ecoterrorism is formulated by writers and environmentalists. Social awareness is created through works of art to prevent the ecological collapse. This paper deals with the polemics of profit makers exploiting nature and environmentalists with biocentric views. "The Madwoman of the Chaillot", a play written by the French dramatist Jean Giraudoux, is taken up to elucidate the argument. The play runs in two acts, with the protagonist, the mad women in Paris, trying to stop the corrupt corporates from digging up the city of Paris for the oil reserve. The play is a poetic satire of the corrupt society, which trades nature for economic benefits. There is a combat between the good and the evil in the play, where the good emerges victorious at the end. The paper argues the desperate need to preserve the nature from the claws of the corrupt corporate capitalists.*

**Keywords:** Ecology, Eco-terrorism, Ecocatastrophe

The term 'ecology' has its origin from the Greeks. "Eco" has its roots from the word "oikos" meaning house, so eco is a house where the organisms dwell. The term 'ecology' can thus be defined as the study of the dwelling place. Further, the ecosystem includes the network of living organisms and their interactions with the abiotic components. The term 'ecology' is interweaved with literature since ancient times. Nature has always been present in the works of art, but mostly it remained as passive back drop. But now, occupies a pivotal position in the current jet age providing beneficial information for the readers.

Eco literature includes myriad ingredients like flora, fauna, soil, air, water, rocks, climate and human interactions with all the above. The pastoral settings render an aesthetic appeal, presenting an idealistic landscape which can be viewed even in the writings of Christopher Marlowe and William Shakespeare. The wilderness of nature triggering sensuousness is visualised in the poems of Keats and Shelly. The pristine landscape infusing spirituality can be seen in the works of Wordsworth. Thus, nature provides fodder for the hunger of the writers in various facets.

The words ecology and literature together formulate ecocriticism, which is also derived from Greek "oikos" and "kritis" and precisely defined as house judge. "Oikos" is nothing but nature which is our widest home and "kritis" is an arbiter, who strives to safeguard it. The main target of ecocriticism is to study the human behaviour in society with respect to ecological aspect. The term "ecocriticism" is coined by William Kueckert in 1978, in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism". Lawrence Buell defines ecocriticism as, "study of the relation between literature and environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmental praxis" (430). Ecological wisdom and cognizance are propagated by Ecologists. This environmental thinking has ignited the spark of awareness to restore the ecosystem. The human exploitation of ecosystem has reached its brim affecting the basic life support systems. The study of nature writing has bloomed in recent times as nature faces a serious threat in the hands of human beings and there is an immediate need to save nature. The writers take up the responsibility of providing solutions to the crisis by sharing their views through their works.

Anthropocentrism claims human beings to be the centre of the universe, justifying the exploitation of the



environment. On the contrary, biocentric view considers man as one among the millions of species on the Earth. Historian Donald Worster feels that the ecocritical consciousness is a major task:

We are facing a global crisis today, not because of how ecosystem functions but rather because of how our ethical systems function, getting through the crisis requires understanding those ethical systems and using that understanding to reform them. Historians along with the literary scholars, anthropologists and philosophers cannot do reforming, of course, but they can help with understanding (27).

Ecocriticism encourages the awareness to the environmental crisis through language and literature. Among the various genres of literature drama proves to be the unparalleled pedagogy, as it is a visual art, which reaches literate and illiterate people alike. The dramatist took this art not only as an entertainment, but also as the way of life. A series of French dramatists like Jean Racine, Moliere and Alexandre Dumas emerged setting a benchmark in that field. During the French revolution, many political messages were propagated by the dramatists in a subtle manner. Theatre played a major role in politics and many revolutionary writers like Roseau came into existence. Jean Giraudoux holds an exceptional spot among the French dramatists of the period between World War I and World War II. Giraudoux deals with serious themes in a humorous way, spiced up with metaphors, paradoxes and illusions in a lyrical language. He attempts to resolve conflicts between antithesis of war and peace in his works employing political and psychological perceptions. His play *The Mad Woman of the Chaillot* was published and staged posthumously, in 1945.

"La Folle de Chaillot" a French play written by Jean Giraudoux is translated into English by Maurice Valency as "*The Madwoman of Chaillot*". The play is a poetic satire set up in the city of Paris. The comic fable takes place at the terrace of the café Chez Francis located in the Chaillot district. The play runs in two acts; in the first act, the conspirators plan for a secret mission. The corrupt people like the President, the Prospector, the Baron and the Broker, devise a wicked plan to dig up the city of Paris and excavate the oil reserve, which they believe to be underneath the city. This dreadful plan comes to the notice of Aurelia, famously called the 'countess' who is the owner of the café. The second act is set in the countess Aurelia's cellar at Rue de Chaillot, where she and her friend abort the destructive plot of the conspirators.

The protagonist Aurelia, is the madwoman of the title, but she is actually sane; she dreams of building an idealistic and happy world. She despises corrupt people and advocates love and peace. Pierre, a young man is hired by the corrupt people to destroy the architecture of the city. Unwilling to carry out this ecocide, Pierre tries to commit suicide. But he is saved by the policeman and brought to Aurelia's café. Aurelia advises him about the beauty of life and asks him to value his life. Indirectly, she saves him from the lure of power-mongers.

Knowing the mentality of men craving for power, the President boasts of his power, "I am President of eleven corporations, director of 52 companies and beginning today, chairman of the board of the international combine in which you have been so good as to accept a post" (MOC7). Intoxication of power drives men crazy to destroy the world. The humanitarian sense is lost in this hunt as the President says, "I trust neither my wife, nor my daughter, my closest friend, nor my confidential secretary" (MOC9). The wealthy and powerful people are greedier than the common people. The Prospector's words add fuel to the fire of their greed, "Is a park any better than a coal mine? What a mountain got that a slag pile hasn't? What would you rather have in your garden – an almond tree or an oil well?" (MOC14). The corrupt gang is bent upon promoting this evil project. This confirms that ethics and morals are replaced by materialistic things.

Aurelia, who stumbles upon the secret plot strives to save the city with the help of Irma, the waitress, Pierre, the assassin, the street juggler, the sewer man, the flower girl, the doorman and the ragpicker. The irony is that all these people belong to the lower strata of the society and are branded as eccentric. But in reality, only these people are sane enough to stop the destruction and create an idealistic world. One could see this through the lens of environmentalism, that concerns preservation and restoration of environment as Arne Naes a Norwegian philosopher formulated biospheric egalitarianism called 'deep ecology'. Mankind needs ecological goods for their sustainability. If the environment deterioration continues, it is sure to affect the human species. The play *The Mad Women of Chaillot* highlights the idea that, it is acceptable that mankind needs oil for technological advancement, but not at the cost of annihilating a civilization and making wars.

Aurelia owns a cellar which has an ancient vault set underground, leading to a bottomless pit. The countess gets the details of the vault from the sewer man, who shows the stairs by pushing the stone. Countess Aurelia

invites a few other madwomen Mme. Constance, Mme. Gabrielle and Mme. Josephine for a tea party. The actual purpose of the invitation is to devise a plan and exterminate the conspirators trying to destroy the city. Her friends suggest that every person should undergo a trial and express his side before getting punished. So, a mock trial is arranged and the rag picker takes the role of the President. During the trial scene, the rag picker as the mouthpiece of the corrupt people clearly indicates his evil intentions, "I propose to make war. I propose to conquer the world" (MOC56). Aurelia explains to her friends the gravity of the situation:

There are people in the world who want to destroy everything. They have the fever of destruction. Even when they pretend they are building, its only in order to destroy. When they put up new building, they quietly knock down two old ones. They build cities in order to destroy the countryside. They destroy space with telephone and time with airplanes. Humanity is now dedicated to a task of universal demolition! (MOC44).

Having convinced the crowd that, they have to act immediately, she devises a plan as counter-move to save their city. The countess lures all the despoilers of the Earth, promising them to show the way to underground oil reserve and lead them to a bottomless pit. She punishes the evil men by closing the pit. Aurelia has holistic approach as a deep ecologist and plays a part in protecting the Earth. The extermination of the wicked people results in the restoration of joy, love, justice and peace. In the combat between good and evil, the good emerges victorious and evil is punished thereby attaining poetic justice. As the waitress Irma exclaims, "Life is beautiful again" (MOC64). The play ends on the happy note delivering pristine environment for the living creatures to lead a happy life. This affirms the Gaia hypothesis that Earth is alive and human beings are part of it.

The play is a political satire with Aurelia representing Paris and the capitalists representing the Nazis in reality. The play ridicules the powerful men of the society and exposes their real intentions. They are driven by power and money, as the countess proclaims, "We live in the reign of golden calf. Did you realize that, Gabrielle? Men now publicly worship golden calf!" (MOC47). The biblical reference to golden calf indicates, money is worshipped as an idol and mankind is in serious pursuit of wealth. Lust for money is insatiable and desire to grow rich and powerful is the root cause of all evil. The greedy people have set a trap for themselves by worship of Mammon, the God of wealth.

The theme of the play unambiguously presents the war between capitalism and environmentalism. Ecology can be saved through peaceful negotiation or protest gathering the support of like-minded people. Countess Aurelia feels that she cannot negotiate with the bigwigs of the corporates. The voice of protest from the proletarians will not reach the ears of echelons. Moreover the protest will be easily quelled. So the only option available for her is to choose the path of eco-terrorism, which cannot be always advocated in all the cases as the only solution. The division of haves and have-nots is so clearly portrayed. Though the countess and her entourage are depicted as insane, only these eccentric people save the city from the claws of the capitalists. Aurelia through the rag picker proves to her friends that ill-gotten wealth vested in the wrong people, and power unchannelised can only lead to destruction and desolation, and end in utter annihilation of humanity.

The capitalists in the play long for power through oil. Oil is popularly called liquid gold and the extraction of oil makes one powerful and wealthy. The extraction of oil poses a serious threat to the environment by disrupting wildlife, reducing vegetation, causing noise pollution and the offshore oil spills resulting in water pollution and affecting marine life. Gulf countries are a treasure of oil resource, which led to the Gulf war. The war between the Iraq and the US-collision armed forces made the country apocalyptic, as the bombing of industrial, chemical and nuclear plants made the city into rubbles with excessive contamination. Gulf suffered severe oil spills by the military forces which led to serious ecocide and the dangers:

Fragile coral-reef systems were damaged, nesting grounds endangered turtles and dugongs were fouled, and the fishing industry in much of the gulf was all but closed down within a month of the start of the war. Early in the war, wildlife specialist in the region predicted a massive die-off of marine animals, including birds, dugongs, dolphins and turtles. Birds were hard-hit by the oil pollution. Saudi officials estimate that at least 14,000 birds were killed along the Saudi shore. (Seager 21)

Jean Giraudoux's *The Mad Women of Chaillot* proves this kind of destructive power of the petrodollars. The mind set of people for power should give way to preserve the environment. The environmental hazards should be analysed and negotiated to establish a change.

The works of art can transcend time and space, which could be related to contemporary world. *The Mad Women of Chaillot* staged in 1943, where the capitalists tried to tear down the city, can be analogous to the issue in the United

States today. The oil industry has expanded in size since that time. The Dakota access pipeline is a project of drilling crude oil from North Dakota to Illinois and transporting the same by constructing the pipeline that passes under Missouri River and culturally significant land of Standing Rock Sioux Tribe. There is a possibility of water contamination and havoc of the sacred land. As Allard La Donna states, "If we allow the oil company dig through and destroy histories our ancestors, our hearts and soul as a people, is that not a genocide?" (Web) Many protest and rallies were held to ban this project. The struggle is still going on and the tribes are fighting to save nature (Worland, Web).

Earth is always personified as mother goddess throughout the world, and Greek mythology calls her Gaia, Primordial deity. In 1979 an environmentalist James Lovelock proposed a theory named Gaia hypothesis. This hypothesis states all living organism co-evolve with their inorganic surroundings for leading a life and forming a dynamic ecosystem maintaining Earth as a fit place for living. This wisdom propagates the need to preserve the mother Earth. The President, Prospector and the Baron in their pursuit of economic progress try to devour the natural resources, destroy Earth and exploit the ecosystem. In that case, concept of Earth as a mother carries a strong irony. If mankind is exploiting the Earth, surely, they have to face catastrophe. Mankind is accountable for all their injustice towards the planet and there is no escapism by employing the metaphor of Mother Earth.

The paper is substantiated with the theories of deep ecology, environmentalism and Gaia hypothesis. Deep ecology believes in biocentrism, that treat all the species alike, independent of usefulness to human beings. It supports the preservation of human habitat and biodiversity. Mankind assumes environmental crisis as the scientist's problem and the magic wand would turn around all the misfortunes. The ecologists have exhorted that it is the mission of everyone to save the planet. Aurelia in this

play takes up the role of an eco-terrorist and fights to preserve the habitat and prevent ecocatastrophe. The uncongenial atmosphere should be transformed into a hospitable place for all the organisms to thrive. Eco pedagogy calls for restructuring of the practices of corporates, capitalists, industrialists and mankind on the whole to prevent apocalypse of the environment. People are taught that economic realities are more important than life, this thought should be proved wrong. The role of ecocriticism is to stress the ethical values of the environment and the need to preserve it from future devastation. Jean Giraudoux takes up the moral responsibility of raising environmental consciousness. This enables the humanity to take a call in envisioning a safe future for the planet.

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## THE APPLICATION OF NATURALIST INTELLIGENCE IN TEACHING ECO-LITERATURE

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### Abstract

*This article deals with the application of Naturalist Intelligence in teaching Eco-Literature to the learners. Naturalist Intelligence is one of the Multiple Intelligences propounded by Howard Gardner in 1983. This study is empirical in nature. The purpose of this empirical research study is to investigate how Naturalist Intelligence is useful to students in learning an Eco-Poem. In so doing, 46 students from a General English Class at Loyola College, Chennai, took part in the research study. It was a two-day programme, where on the first day, the students were introduced to Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory, and activities related to Naturalist Intelligences were implemented. On the following day, the students were taught an eco-poem through Naturalist Intelligence, and at the end of the class, they were given a questionnaire to find out how Naturalist Intelligence helped them in gaining language skills as well as life skills. The result was analysed and interpreted. This article also describes Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences and throws light on Naturalist Intelligence, methodology, and steps used while catering to Naturalist Intelligence through an Eco-poetry.*

**Keywords:** Multiple Intelligences, Naturalist Intelligence, Ecology, Nature, Holistic growth.

### Introduction

The theory of Multiple Intelligences (MI) has been introduced by Howard Gardner. The basic idea of this theory is that there are at least eight intelligences in every human being. This theory has been implemented by many educators in many parts of the world. India follows the traditional method that makes the students focus only on two intelligences, such as Linguistic Intelligences and Logical- Mathematical Intelligences. Students are also assessed only by the advancement and growth of these two intelligences. Moreover, examinations are also conducted only to find out whether students excel in these two intelligences. Giving too much attention to traditional approach can paralyse the growth of other unused intelligences in the human brain. The unused intelligences are those that are inactive. In order to activate the unused intelligences in the brain, Howard Gardner's theory of Multiple Intelligences will be of a great use. The use of this theory activates the intelligences in the brain and makes the students discover the hidden potentialities and brings to light the holistic growth of the individual as well as provide them a complete formation.

### Multiple Intelligences theory

Howard Gardner calls the eight intelligences as- Linguistic, Logical-Mathematical, Spatial, Bodily-kinesthetic, Musical, Interpersonal, Intrapersonal, and Naturalist intelligences. A common thinking about spatial, musical and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences is that they are talents. People understand that these intelligences are talents because when a person is active with spatial intelligences then he or she can draw well. Similarly, when a person is active with musical and bodily-kinesthetic intelligences, then he or she can sing or play music well or excel in sports. This is a common understanding among most of the people across the world. However, MI theory does not accept that these competencies are talents. It says that they are intelligences and everybody has them. Armstrong (2000) says that Musical, Spatial and Bodily-kinesthetic are Intelligences rather than talents or aptitudes.

A person cannot be prejudiced with the idea that he/she can possess only one or two intelligences and can use only those two intelligences. MI theory has emerged from various practical proved facts. Gardner worked with several individuals who suffered accidents, and illnesses that affected a particular area or specific area of the brain. He brought out amazing facts about intelligence, testing

those people whose particular area in the brain has been damaged. Armstrong (2000) states vividly that brain lesions may have impaired one portion of the brain but leaves other portion intact so that those whose left temporal lobe is affected and have difficulty in speaking, reading and writing can do well in math, dance, and also reflect well on feelings and relate to others. In the same way a lesion in the temporal lobe of the right hemisphere may affect musical intelligence and frontal lobe lesions may affect personal intelligences. However, when one area is affected, the other area is active and learning still takes place.

Therefore, it is clear that when all the intelligences are activated, an individual can do wonders with the help of each intelligence that has been activated. Gardner also did his research with some other people whose particular intelligence would be very high and the other intelligence would be too low that they cannot use it. These people he calls Savants. Savants are the people who have superior abilities in part of an intelligence while the other intelligences function at a very low level.

Gardner defines the intelligence as "the ability to solve problems or to create fashion products that are valued within one or more cultural settings" (Gardner, 1983, 81). The concept of general intelligence *g* has been shifted to multiple intelligence by Howard Gardner. His view on intelligence made a drastic change on intelligence from conventional and traditional way with a single capacity of intelligence to multiple capacities of intelligences. Gardner (1983) says that intelligence is a bio-psychological potential which could be influenced by experience, culture and motivational factors. He says that intelligence as an independent capacity will move a person to different ways of learning. MI theory is a theory that tells us that there are at least eight intelligences in every individual and all are capable to use all the intelligences. According to Gardner, each of these multiple intelligences is linked to an independent system in the brain (Gardner, 1999). The goal of teaching must be holistic. A teacher must provide opportunities to students to think about a topic in different ways. When a person thinks about a topic in different ways, creativity is born. MI theory provides a way for all the teachers to reflect on their own teaching methods that are best and also makes them realize why some students are able to fit into the best methods and why others are not able to fit themselves. Therefore, this theory will expand the "current teaching methods, materials and techniques for reaching a wider range of learners" (Armstrong 2000, 39).

This paper attempts to focus only on Naturalist Intelligence. It brings out the use of Naturalist Intelligence in teaching Eco-Literature to the students. It says the importance of activating this particular intelligence among the students makes them learn language and literature effectively.

### Naturalist Intelligence

Natural intelligence is the eighth intelligence Gardner has discovered. It brings out the representation of the observation and distinctions made in the natural world. Gardner (1995) says that the individual with high Naturalist Intelligence will be able to recognize the flora and fauna in the natural world and also be able to make consequential distinction in the natural world. Fogarty (2008) indicates that through the lens of the Naturalist Intelligence, one can discover minute changes in the environment. One can also classify, label and keep records on the changes of the environment. This intelligence consists of nature walk, bird watching etc.

Armstrong (2000) notes that the Naturalist Intelligence consist of nature walks, gardening, eco study, windows on to learning, pets in the classroom, etc. He continues to say that learning should be outside the classroom, that is, in the environment which consists of Nature. This could be done with field trips, gardening, and class on the lawn. Sometimes visiting aquarium, bird cages, plants etc., will provide homely atmosphere for the students with Naturalist Intelligence. This intelligence will boost the creativity among the students to write poetries and pieces of writings related to Nature.

Campbell (2008) writes that teachers should encourage students to use binoculars, telescope, and microscope to observe natural phenomena. They must be able to sort and categorize rocks, shells, or any other natural objects. Teachers should encourage students to think and reflect on the local and global environment consciously. Students can take initiatives to grow plants in their educational institutions and also in the streets where there is need of plant growth. This could be done by the students and they must submit a report or students can be given a project on this area so that they may get to develop interpersonal intelligences together with this intelligence and thus language is also developed with them. They use language as a median to express their ideas in the project and produce the report effectively.

A Naturalist demonstrates expertise in the recognition and classification of the numerous species- the flora and fauna- of his or her environment (Gardner, 1999). This

intelligence helps a person to observe and differentiate various elements from this world. When language is taught in an open environment at least once a week, students who have high Naturalist Intelligence will contribute more in language learning. This will also activate the Naturalist Intelligence of others whose Naturalist Intelligence is dormant. It connects the learner with nature and makes him/her feel one with it. MI tools for Naturalist Intelligence are: Categorizing natural elements from the text, reading nature and environment stories, writing tips for caring nature, writing how to rear pets, writing how to maintain garden, collecting seeds, shells, leaves and demonstrating in class on its importance etc., visiting zoos and writing reports, arguments for preserving nature, and reflections on environmental issues, etc.

### Application of Naturalist Intelligence

Another way of teaching Language is through Literature. By noticing relationships, categorizing and classifying Natural elements, one can activate or enhance the Naturalist Intelligence in students. The teachers may also choose Eco-Poetries or short stories and help the students learn language through Naturalist Intelligence. Students with dominant Naturalist Intelligence have the tendency to find the relationship among the words pertaining to Nature. They also have high ability to observe minute details of their surroundings. The language teacher should appreciate this ability and encourage such students to describe what they have observed in past tense. This makes them develop the skill of describing details in particular. An outdoor scene can also be described in a classroom in a way of providing information. Moreover, students can also be encouraged to describe a Nature scene outside their classroom by using their imagination, even when such scene is completely absent in the present time. Such activity will encourage the students who describe as well as students who listen to the description to contribute something to Nature, such as creating Nature-filled atmosphere around their vicinity.

Naturalist Intelligence can also be enhanced and activated through Eco-studies. Eco-poems, eco-stories etc., will enhance the students in activating the Naturalist Intelligence and make them contribute much in Environmental growth. Any Eco-poem can be taken and the teacher has to use activities pertaining to Naturalist Intelligence. One or two aspects can be taken at a moment while catering to this Intelligence. They may be 'Nature-Nurture' concept that is how environment influences the behavior of the students through culture, nutrition, society,

family and education. Another element can be 'interconnectedness' that is how Nature is interconnected to the human beings or how human beings are interconnected to Nature. Together with this, 'dependence' can also be taken for consideration, that is, how man and Nature are depended with each other. 'Conservation and Preservation' can also be taken into consideration while catering to Naturalist Intelligence. That is, steps to be followed in conserving and preserving Nature. Likewise, the teacher has to prepare concepts and elements while teaching Eco-literature by activating Naturalist Intelligence. Each class is unique in its nature. Therefore, the procedure in applying this Intelligence may differ from class to class. After studying the students for a period of time, the teacher has to prepare the procedure and methods in teaching Eco-literature using Naturalist Intelligence. This will benefit the students to understand the literature as well as help them contribute much to Nature. Otherwise, all that they study may be recorded only in black and white without any attempt to reach the Green.

The following poetry is taken as an example to show how Naturalist Intelligence can be applied and make the students benefit the maximum.

### Text used for the Empirical Study A Tree

By Poorvi Anchalia

I entered the earth as a small plant  
 Tiny and helpless like an infant  
 Then I grow up and become as active  
 As a school child  
 Very strong and very wild  
 Then comes the stage when I am of  
 middle age  
 Commanding and brave  
 Like a sailor who can withstand the  
 gigantic waves  
 After a few years I turn old and my growth  
 becomes slow  
 And I start to lose all my beauty and glow  
 In my younger years I was healthy and  
 fresh  
 Now my health is in a bit of a mess  
 But whatever age I am, I'll not stop giving  
 you fruits  
 Unless you pull me out of the soil by my  
 ROOTS!!

## Methodology

The steps to be followed while teaching Eco-literature by activating Naturalist Intelligence (Zile, 2001) are:

Step 1 - Make the students read the poem in groups or as individuals. (Preparatory skills, Reflection, Reading skills)

Step 2 - Make the students do a research on the setting, environment, location, scenery, and comparisons given in the poem. (Categorizing Natural elements found in the text, observation skills, critical thinking, and Listening skills)

Step 3 - Making use of the research done, the students are asked to describe the environment portrayed in the poem in past tense. They are encouraged to observe minute ecological and environmental details found in the poem and record them in their notebooks for further description. (Sentence pattern, Past Tense, descriptive writing, note making, writing skills)

Step 4 - The students are motivated to explain how environment and Nature influence the mood, setting, characters and theme of the poem. (Incorporation of Ideas, presentation, Detail explanation- Natural phenomena, interpretation, description, speaking skills)

Step 5 - Finally, the students have to relate the poetry to their life and find how the elements of Nature affect them internally as well as externally, and teach them lessons in

order to grow as complete human beings. (Rational thinking, application of ideas, connecting the lesson with life, transformation, care for Nature, protection and conservation of Nature)

Based on the above mentioned steps, an empirical research is conducted with the students from the General English class. They were totally 46 students. They were taught about MI theory and Naturalist Intelligence. Further, activities related to Naturalist Intelligence, as mentioned earlier, were given to them in order to activate this intelligence. On the second day, the students were taught the Poem 'A Tree' by Poorvi Anchalia through steps pertaining to Naturalist Intelligence. Once the tasks were completed, a short questionnaire was given to them to find the result of the study. The data were collected and tabulated. The following is the analyses and interpretation of the data collected.

## Analysis and Interpretation

After teaching Eco-literature to 46 students in the General English class at Loyola College, Chennai, by activating Naturalist Intelligence, data were collected through questionnaire. The result was analysed and the following is the interpretation of the result collected from the students.

Table 1

Statement	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
Step 1- Developed Preparatory skills, Reflection, Reading skills	22	48	19	41	2	4	3	7

From the data given above, it is pointed out clearly in Table 1 that 48% and 41% of the class responded strong agreement and agreement respectively for step 1 that is making the students read the poem individually, because

this step made them gain the preparatory skill, reflection and reading skill. Only 11% of the total class showed disagreement towards step 1.

Table 2

Statement	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
Step 2- Learnt how to categorize Natural elements found in the text, developed observation skills, critical thinking, Listening skills	33	72	11	24	1	2	1	2

Table 2 points out that 96% of the class showed agreement and 4% of the class showed disagreement towards step 2, that is doing research on the setting, environment, location, scenery and comparisons given in

the eco-poem. This positive response is because the students were able to categorize natural elements found in the text, developed observation skills, critical thinking, and listening skills.

Table 3

Statement	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
Step 3- Learnt sentence pattern, past tense, descriptive writing, note making, writing skills	36	78	10	22	0	0	0	0

It is derived from the data in Table 3 that 100% of the students in the class expressed their agreement towards step 3, that is, using the research done on setting, environment, etc., the students described the environment

portrayed in the poem in past tense. They also observed minute ecological elements from the poem and developed note making. Moreover, they learnt descriptive writing.

Table 4

Statement	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
Step 4- Learnt how to incorporate ideas during presentation and interpret the text, learnt detail explanation of Natural phenomena, learnt how to present description, developed speaking and communicative skills	33	72	12	26	1	2	0	0

From the analysis, it is also found in Table 4 that 98% of the students opined agreement, and 2% of them responded disagreement towards step 4. They explained how Nature influenced the mood, setting, characters and

theme of the poem. They learnt how to incorporate ideas during presentation and interpret the text. Furthermore, they were also equipped with good communicating skills.

Table 5

Statement	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
Step 5- Developed rational thinking, application of ideas, learnt how to connect the lesson with life, experienced transformation, developed interests to care, protect and conserve Nature.	23	50	22	48	1	2	0	0

It is vividly highlighted in the Table 5 that 98% of the class responded agreement and 2% expressed disagreement towards step 5. They related the poem to their life and found how Nature affected them internally and externally. They developed rational thinking, application of ideas, connecting the poem with life, and also learnt how to care and protect Nature.

Therefore, it is clear that Naturalist Intelligence do help the students to learn language skills as well as life skills. The activation and application of Naturalist

Intelligence among the students reflected positive results. Moreover, there were a few statements given to the students to find how Naturalist Intelligence helped them towards learning an Eco-poem, develop critical and rational thinking, develop a sense to care and protect Nature, and to find whether learning English through Multiple Intelligences (MI) theory is practical and learner-centred. Table 6 represents the data and the statements given to the students.



Table 6

Statement	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %	No. of students	in %
	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
Learning Eco-Literature by activating Naturalist Intelligence gives better understanding of the text.	20	43	21	46	4	9	1	2
Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing Skills are used to the maximum while learning through activities pertaining to Naturalist Intelligence	27	59	18	39	1	2	0	0
Critical and Rational Thinking are tapped	33	72	10	22	2	4	1	2
Learning English language through MI theory is practical and learner centred approach	24	53	20	43	2	4	0	0
A sense to protect and care Nature is enkindled in me	27	59	18	39	1	2	0	0

From the data presented in Table 6, it is found that 89% of the students expressed their view that by activating Naturalist Intelligence they were able to get better understanding of the text. 98% of the students were in an opinion that they were able to use Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing skills to the maximum while learning through activities pertaining to Naturalist Intelligence. 94% of them agreed that their rational and critical thinking were tapped. 96% of the class responded positively for the statement in the table, 'Learning English language through Multiple Intelligence Theory is practical and learner-centred, whereas 98% of the students agreed and strongly agreed that they developed a sense to care and protect Nature. Thus, teaching eco-literature through Multiple Intelligences theory, particularly through Naturalist Intelligence will enable the learners learn maximum and help them to contribute much to the environment.

### Conclusion

MI theory is based on individual differences and learner preferences. It makes learners explore the intelligences at first and then it helps them develop the intelligences that they have explored, and finally makes them benefiting in using the intelligences that are developed naturally. Teaching Eco-literature by activating Naturalist Intelligence will benefit the students holistically, and it has been proved empirically through statistical data. The result shows that the students have also gained the joy in contributing as much as possible to Nature as well as to the society and culture. Therefore, to bring all these things into reality in every class, the teacher has to provide ample opportunity in using Naturalist Intelligence in classroom.

The role of the teacher in a language classroom is to activate this intelligence so that the students with dominant intelligences enhance their learning and students with dormant intelligences benefit much when they are given opportunities to learn language. Even phonology can be taught using Naturalist Intelligence. Such an approach to language teaching through MI theory makes an individual develop his/her entire personality and provide scope for a holistic development.

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## ECOFEMINIST ASPECTS IN CHITRA BANERJEE DIVAKARUNI'S "MISTRESS OF SPICES"

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### Abstract

*Ecocriticism which started and gradually wound up plainly famous in most recent couple of decades is the investigation or depiction of condition in different structures. It later got spread out into ecofeminism which learns about women and their connection with nature. A few Indian essayists appropriate from Raja Rao to R.K.Narayan and present day writers like Shashi Deshpande, Anita Desai, and Arundhati Roy contributed through their work to this branch of ecocriticism. This paper attempts to ponder ecofeminism in the novel Mistress of Spices composed by Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni. Chitra Banerjee utilizes the distinctive components of nature like fire and water in the whole novel. She utilizes submerged life, island and sea as the indispensable piece of setting in the novel and serpents, Sampatti's fire as characters in the work. Flavors are intertwined in the novels that are utilized by Tilo to cure and mend the Asian people group in Oakland. Every section is named after a flavor. The expressive highlight of the novel additionally has nature and its distinctive components. Nature turns into an indivisible piece of this work and it is displayed in every one of its structures and the entire cycle of creation, conservation and annihilation.*

**Keywords:** Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni, Ecocriticism, Ecofeminism, Mistress of Spices, nature.

Women have for quite some time been aligned with nature; Earth is deduced to be female in nature it has regularly been allegorically named as 'Mother Earth'. Verifiably, women have had a swoon get to control in the outside world, they had been rejected from formative strategies, or their parts were viewed as auxiliary to the potential monetary additions. Or maybe one might say, women have been for the most part resigned, as has been nature. Anthropological investigations have recommended that the recognizable proof of women with nature and guys with culture is both old and unavoidable. The word 'ecology' rises up out of the organic investigation of characteristic ecological frameworks. It looks at how these regular groups capacity to maintain a solid web of life and how they wind up plainly disturbed, making passing the plant and creature life.

The term ecofeminism was first used by French women activists Francoise D' Eaubonne in 1974. (Le Feminisme 9). Eco woman's rights, as Karen Warren notes, is an umbrella term for a wide assortment of methodologies. One might be communist, ecofeminist, and so on, Although the order of eco women's liberation is a challenged point, what holds these desperate position together is the claim that as Karen composes, there are

essential association between the control of women and the mastery of nature. (Ecological Preface x). It is a rationality and development conceived from the union of women's activist and biological considering and the conviction that the social attitude that prompts the mastery and persecution of women is straightforwardly associated with the social mindset that prompts the mishandle of the regular habitat. It joins eco-turmoil or bioregional vote based system with a solid perfect women's liberation. Its supporters regularly stress a profound love for all life, and significance of interrelationship between people, non-human and the earth. Ecofeminism speaks to the union of the radical biology development, or what has been called 'profound environment', and women's liberation.

Women drove ecological activism and writing in India in India, the Chipko development has increased famous status and is currently referred to as an exceedingly effective case of grassroots environmentalism in India. This development is additionally entered for the path in which it activated women. This development realized the idea of tree-embracing to stop exercises, for example, deforestation, ambling and mining. The development started in the Garhwal locale of Uttaranchal in Uttar Pradesh, India. The state's expanding commercialization

and underdevelopment of the Garhwal area was instrumental in the conceptualization of this development, where neighborhood ladies were influenced by state-level choices, for example, allowing private contractual workers reap rights for the trees to fabricate cricket bats. Because of exorbitant deforestation, the year 1970 saw its most pulverizing surge and similarly damaging avalanches. In later conditions, other women who have driven environmental causes and advancements are MedhaPatkar, Mahasweta Devi, Arundhati Roy and C.K Janu. MedhaPatkar heads the Narmada Bachao Andolan, a social improvement involving tribal people, adivasis, agriculturists, tree huggers and human rights activists against the Sardar Sarovar Dam being worked over the Narmada conduit in Gujarat, India.

Activists and women composing postcolonial Indian fiction in English have for the most part not been concurred much consideration in the ecocritical field. A case at that point should be worked for why women authors are essential to this extend. Numerous Indian women writers not just investigate female subjectivity with a specific end goal to set up a personality that isn't forced by a male centric culture, yet their work additionally holds money for making social issues a key part in their books. Indian women ' written work, particularly from the twentieth century onwards, is beginning to be seen as an intense medium of innovation and women's liberation. Indian women writers writing in English, for example, Kiran Desai and Arundhati Roy have earned universal eminence by winning esteemed honors, for example, the Booker Prize, and their quality in the English-talking abstract world can't be overlooked or sidelined. Indian women writers in the present milieu have started to voice their worries on globalization in India, and its effect on sexual orientation and family relations and the earth comprehended in its broadest sense Ambivalent connections of ladies and condition in Indian fiction by women .We now come to women composing Indian fiction in English and the earth. This segment will attempt to answer why it is critical to take a gander at postcolonial ecofeminism in the works of Indian ladies writers, and what it is that these authors bring to the table to the belief system, hypothesis and the lived material reality of women in and of the earth. The novels considered range from early ecofeminism to urban ecofeminsim: *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) by Kamala Markandya, *Fire on the Mountain* (1977) by Anita Desai, *The God of Small Things* (1997) by Arundhati Roy, *The Madwoman of Jogare* (1998) by Sohaila Abdulali, and *Monkey-Man* (2010) by Usha K.R. These authors, while expounding

on particular and private lives about women, in any case put forth profoundly political expressions about social issues and Indian culture on the loose. The emphasis on the particular and the private is one motivation behind why women journalists from this class are frequently disregarded and not considered important.

Multifaceted, Chitra Banerjee Divakaruni is an expert Indian American creator, writer and educator who join in her works *Diaspora*, *women's liberation* and *ecofeminism*. One of the works that unequivocally portrays ecofeminism in her books is *The Mistress of Spices*. This book has been made into a film and was likewise short recorded for Orange prize. In *Mistress of Spices*, Tilo, an authority in the mystery energy of flavors, devotes her life to aiding those in require inside the South Asian people group in California. Tilo the fancy woman of flavors is the hero of the novel and is prepared by the First Mother among the nature to utilize flavors as mending power. She was named *Nayantara* during childbirth, the star of the eye, star diviner, and furthermore the bloom that develops by the clean road. As the cows run dry at the season of her introduction to the world she was encouraged with the drain of ass which helped her in getting the sight and words sooner than others. The creator conveys her nearer to nature and traps as long as she can remember with various components of nature from her introduction to the world. She was an uncommon kid as she had otherworldly powers and utilized them for the villagers and consequently got extravagances of life for her and her family. Out of weariness, uneasiness and tedium she sent a calling thought with a gold snare over the waters by which privateers came looking for her and took her away murdering her folks and obliterating the town with flame. She carries on with her existence with the privateers bringing life and demise as the ruler of privateers. Her life gets more entwined with the forces given by nature. As a privateer ruler she surveys her life and needs to know her aching and sends a bringing thoroughly considered the water once more. Thus a hurricane comes in the water and she gets discharged and spared by the serpents of submerged. Water and fire turn into an essential piece of her life that progressions her life from a town beauty to a privateer ruler and now takes her to an obscure universe of flavors and enchantment drove by the serpents, she hops into the water and in the morning she got herself bare on the shore. She is picked by the First Mother as the zest young lady and under the direction of First Mother she renames herself as *Tilottama* It implies Life provider, restorer of wellbeing and expectation. Tilo cherishes flavors, knows their roots, what their hues imply,

their scents and even their actual names. Their warmth keeps running in her blood. All flavors bow to her charge, yield their properties and enchantment powers. Each Indian zest was found in her store and when put in her grasp they address her and even direct her at essential circumstances. Spice bazaar was the name of her shop fitted at the corner. Every section of this novel is named after a zest which uncovers their forces and their origins. The creator turns an astonishing story of flavors with a blend of nature, where nature turns into a vital piece of setting and a character itself. The First mother lives in the island where Tilo lands and invests her energy among the quiet yet magical island to gain from the old one. The story around flavors and the nature—a world brimming with puzzle, set oblivious luster's of an island encompassed by water appears to be genuine and terrifying. From this place that is known for nature Tilo is transported through flame of Sampati (the Eastern phoenix) to Oakland. Divakaruni has represented couple of sentences exquisitely like, "But today the light is pink-tinted like just – blossomed karabi flowers". The hero at first known as Nayan Tara used to play in warm broke fields behind her father's house and when she used to be sweat-soaked the land snakes used to shield her from sun. Later when she turned into a privateer she was called Bhagyavati, around then her life was spared by the snakes and they used to disclose to her stories of Nagraj. They were her companions; they used to whisper to her. The fire of Sampati, the water through which Bhagawati, Nayantara sends messages, the names of paramours and even the different methods of expression utilized as a part of the novel are unceasing parts of nature. Towards the end of the novel a staggering quake that symbolizes the Indian theory of creation, protection and annihilation finishes the cycle however bonds Raven the male hero of the novel to Maya, the name given to Tilo by Raven and demonstrates the rough side of nature. "Together Tilo and Raven search for the „earthly paradise“, a fantasy world symbolizing an idealistic presence." "High up in the mountains, pine and eucalyptus, sodden scent of redwood, bark and cone" (199). This way the cycle of nature additionally reaches an end from starting with Nayantara's creation as a foreseer and further is saved and reestablished as she goes ahead to be started as the flavor young woman by the First mother and

towards the end every one of the forces given are reclaimed pulverized as she breaks the guidelines of getting candidly joined with somebody and even revolutionaries to come to fruition as a wonderful woman. The earth shake wrecks everything except for not her confidence to make again from the rubbles. In demolition additionally the life grows once more.

Man manages the connections that women have with urbanization, improvement and the city. The open doors that the city presents to the ladies has echoes of the talk of globalization—break even with open doors for all. Such connections don't sit easily with the dualism of nature/culture. The move from rustic to urban spaces demonstrates that postcolonial ecofeminism isn't a static hypothesis, disconnected to wild or field scenes alone. This novel likewise consolidates the measurements of urban neurosis and frenzy, an appearance of adapting to the pressures of globalization and improvement, featuring that the urban condition can be a space for both creation and devastation.

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## THE JUNGLE BOOK: EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF IDENTITY IN RELATION TO NATURE

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### Abstract

Children's literature has a crucial impact when it comes to voicing ecological concerns and making people conscious of the importance of nature. This paper attempts to analyse one of the most famous children's books, *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling written in 1894 in order to understand the man-made ecological hierarchy that exists in the world we live in. An invisible hierarchy that places man right on top of the pyramid and rest of nature under him that exists for his service. *The Jungle Book* places the character Mowgli in two contrasting spaces, in a natural and manmade setting to explore the notion of identity that exists in human beings. The theory of Self Realization proposed by Arne Naess would serve as a theoretical framework for a better understanding of the text and ecological ideas. It is necessary to incorporate ecological concepts into children's literature as it can develop an 'ecological consciousness' among the young readers. This research paper is significant because it views the book from a purely ecological perspective and criticism drawn from it will help develop an eco-literature for children, which is important in today's degrading world. *The Jungle Book* deals with various ecological concepts and can be considered as one of the pioneers in children's eco-literature.

**Keywords:** Ecology, Identity, Self-Realization, *The Jungle Book*, Eco-Literature.

Children's literature forms a prominent part in the field of writing. One cannot forget that fairy tales and bedtime stories are an essential part of childhood stimulating the child's imagination and imparting knowledge. Books transport them into strange worlds and situations that generally will not occur to them in real life.

"Children's literature is important because it provides children with opportunities to respond to literature; it helps students develop emotional intelligence and creativity; it nurtures growth and development of the child's personality and social skills." (Norton 2)

With this kind of an influence, it is necessary that we make younger minds aware of the present state and condition of the earth and their relationship with it. One of the important aspects to deal with is to replace anthropocentrism by ecocentrism (the view that all living things and their earthly environment are no less than the human species and possess importance and value) in children's books.

One of the most popular children's books of all time is *The Jungle Book* by Rudyard Kipling written in 1894. *The Jungle Book* has inspired countless film adaptations, musicals, video games etc. that shows how much of an influence it has even today. This paper will concentrate on the first three stories, which revolve around the man-child, Mowgli and his adventures in the jungle and how important ecological notions can be transmitted to children by ecocritically analysing this classic children's book. The

main character, Mowgli, is raised by wolves, trained and taught by a panther and a bear, kidnapped by monkeys, rescued by a snake and kills and skins a tiger, is the basic story. On a deeper level, this text gives the reader various ecological insights regarding the laws of the jungle, the kind of relationship with human beings and nature and so on. The character Mowgli undergoes the process of identification in relation to his natural surroundings adhering to the existing ecological hierarchy.

For an ecocritic, nature is not merely a literary or cultural concept but it as an actual entity that influences and affects us. *Self Realization* is a concept introduced by Arne Naess in his essay *Self Realization: An Ecological Approach to being in the World*, which talks about an ecological self with which one identifies with nature. He stresses that, there needs to be a change from the egoistical self to the ecological self. *Self Realization* is identifying that one's relation with nature is a part of oneself.

"If this place is destroyed, something in me is destroyed or if this place is changed I am changed." (39)

He talks about the importance of environmental ethics when people feel that they have sacrificed or unselfishly given up their self-interest to preserve nature it becomes dangerous in the long run. Through the process of identification, they may come to see their own interest served by through genuine self-love, love of a deepened self and conservation.

"The 'everything hangs around' maxim of ecology applies to the self and its relation to other living beings, ecosystems and the ecosphere." (40)

Using this theoretical approach to literary texts will help examine the intimate relation with nature, to recognize and accept the ecological self, inspiration drawn from ecology and place of human beings in the man-made ecological hierarchy. In the story, he heavily leans on the ancient talking animal convention and uses other strategies to anthropomorphise its fictional non-humans. The limitation of this research is that it only focuses on the concept of identity while there are other ecological factors that remain to be explored.

Kipling's *The Jungle Book* deals with the major theme of human relationships and the symbiotic relationship that exists between man and nature. The character Mowgli undergoes the process of identification in relation to his natural surroundings adhering to the existing ecological hierarchy. This paper will attempt to apply the theory of *Self Realization* proposed by Arne Naess to the famous children's book *The Jungle Book*. An identity is usually constructed in relation to one's social, cultural and one's natural surroundings. Arne Naess discusses the same in his essay on *Self Realization*.

"Traditionally the maturity of self has been considered to develop through three stages, from ego to social self, comprising the ego and from there to the metaphysical self, comprising the social self." (Naess 35)

He introduces the term *ecological self* where he feels that nature is an important part of this identification process and we are in, of and from nature from the beginning. This influence of nature in the self-identification process is seen immensely in Mowgli's character, as he has lived in close association with the jungle all his life. Mowgli who was brought up in the jungle by the Seeonee Wolf pack identifies with the animals that are close to him, but at the same time shows human characteristics.

"We be of one blood, ye and I" (27)

This is one of the famous lines in the book which is a metaphorical statement made by Mowgli about the unity and brotherhood of the jungle, but, how much of this is true can be seen in the latter part of the story. The conflict of choosing between his 'man cub' or 'wolf child' self is a prominent factor that runs through the story. In the beginning of the story, Kipling tells us how Mowgli was accepted and brought up in the wolf pack as one of them, teaching him the ways of the jungle.

"He grew up with the cubs, though they, of course, were grown wolves almost before he was a child. And

Father Wolf taught him his business, and the meaning of things in the jungle." (Kipling 8)

The animals in the jungle are aware right from the start that he is a human and therefore he is different. This difference is clearly seen, when he is referred to as the 'man cub' by Mother Wolf in the beginning, which marks his identity, with 'man' as his definite characteristic. Kipling consciously or unconsciously forms an ecological hierarchy placing man on top and empowering him to dominate over nature. Throughout the story, we see instances in which Mowgli's human side tries to gain supremacy over the other beings. Kipling made the readers aware of Mowgli's superior nature, especially at the Council Rock meetings.

"He took his place at the Council Rock, too, when the Pack met, and there he discovered that if he stared hard at any wolf, the wolf would be forced to drop his eyes, and so he used to stare for fun." (Kipling 8)

Mowgli consciously or accidentally becomes aware of his place in the hierarchy and staring at his lower beings becomes an assertion of this power. Naturally, man who walks upright is always at a higher level than his four legged animal species that crawl below him. This demeaning attitude of Mowgli just comes naturally to him and that is why he stares at the wolves for amusement. This kind of empowerment made Mowgli stand out from the pack, as a mere look from him, would make them feel uncomfortable and with Shere Khan's influence, the wolves felt that the man cub had no place in the pack.

Fire or the Red Flower, as the animals, call it is a perfect example of a metaphor for all the ways that man tries to control nature. Kipling tells us that no creature in the jungle will call fire by its real name because every beast lies in deadly fear of it. Fire, then, represents power and disparity. Sure enough, Mowgli unleashes this most feared weapon to prove his superiority in the climax. Mowgli gives one of the hard-hitting dialogues on realizing this division.

"Listen you!" he cried. "There is no need for this dog's jabber. Ye have told me so often tonight that I am a man that I feel your words are true. So I do not call ye my brothers any more, but sag, as a man should. What ye will do, and what ye will not do, is not yours to say. That matter is with me; and that we may see the matter more plainly, I, the man, have brought here a little of the Red Flower which ye, dogs, fear." (Kipling 12)

These lines are the perfect proof for the existence of an ecological hierarchy. Mowgli's outburst on leaving the pack leads to his transformation of accepting his man self, which changes his line of thought. The wolves are not his

brothers or equal to him anymore but he refers to them as dogs, animals who belong further down in the hierarchy. Divisions exist not just among different species but also within them where wolves take up a higher position than that of a dog in the hierarchy. Mowgli's higher stature gives him the authority to be condescending and humiliating to the animals that belong to the lower level of the hierarchy. Shere Khan, the antagonist is put down by Mowgli's overpowering and violent nature, making us question if the roles have been reversed.

"Up, dog!" Mowgli cried. "Up, when a man speaks, or I will set that coat ablaze! Shere Khan's ears lay flat back on his head, and he shut his eyes, for the blazing branch was very near... He beat Shere Khan over the head with the branch, and the tiger whimpered and whined in an agony of fear." (Kipling 13)

Again, he brings down Shere Khan by calling him a dog and uses fire as a weapon to control the fierce tiger. He almost tames him using this power, threatening to set his coat on fire if he did not look up. Demanding respect and recognition from other beings by means of force is a characteristic that man continually employs to assert his dominance.

On the other side of the coin, the villagers refer to him as the 'wolf child' placing the animal in him at the centre, with his animal behaviour defining him and marking him different from civilized man. Mowgli finally expects to fit in with the people where he actually belongs but his free animal side gets in the way of his civilized social self. Kipling makes it a point to criticize the ways and customs of men from an outsider's perspective.

"First he had to wear a cloth round him, which annoyed him horribly; and then he had to learn about money, which he did not in the least understand, and about plowing, of which he did not see the use..... And Mowgli had not the faintest idea of the difference that caste makes between man and man." (Kipling 31)

Mowgli was treated as an alien when he entered into the civilized society of humans. He did not understand their language or their need to clothe themselves. Agriculture was a very new concept to him, a purely man-made way of exploiting nature. That is why he did not see the purpose of ploughing when the land naturally provided for your needs. The distinction among different species was a part of the jungle but differentiation among your own beings in the name of caste was something Mowgli could not comprehend. There were various other problems that Mowgli faced in the human society. One of them was the interpretations of the jungle by the villagers as being

ghostly and deadly. His animal side dominates and he fails to fit into the rigid system set by society. By the end of the story, we see that he is cast out of the village branded as a sorcerer, wolf cub and jungle demon.

"Wolf! Wolf's cub! Go away!" shouted the priest, waving a sprig of the sacred tulsi plant. Again? Last time it was because I was a man. This time it is because I am a wolf." (Kipling 37)

Mowgli's irresolvable conflict to find a place in the ecological or social hierarchy and his tale of self-discovery are the themes that run the story. Throughout the narrative, we see that Kipling clearly forms an anthropocentric hierarchy. Placing Mowgli in this hierarchy is the major task that Kipling undertakes in the story of *The Jungle Book*. The identity crisis, which befalls Mowgli, is because there is a lack of *Self Realization*. He fails to identify himself with the animals because of his narrow ego, which makes him feel superior and believes in binaries. He does not seem to fit in because he does not understand the 'everything hangs together' maxim of ecology and the interconnectedness of nature. The hierarchy present causes an absence of ecological egalitarianism leading to distinctions. According to Naess, love for others and love for us are not alternatives. On the contrary, an attitude of love towards themselves will be found in all those who are capable of loving others (38). There has to be a bridge from Self Love to *Self Realization* and that is the process of identification.

Stories and writings about nature in children's literature can enhance and develop their knowledge of ecological concepts. The identity crisis of the character Mowgli and his relationship with nature is significant as it highlights an ecological hierarchy, which is present, placing man right at the top it and the rest of nature under him. Discussing these ecological concepts in children's literature in classrooms and social spaces will enable the child to develop an ecological consciousness and their exposure to the natural world and its concerns at an early age can acquire their respect and value for nature.

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## HOW DID WE 'LAND' IN TROUBLE? A SOCIO-ECOLOGICAL EXPERIMENT IN DANIEL QUINN'S ISHMAEL DUOLOGY

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### Abstract

*This paper aims to study the marrow of Social Ecology in the novels: Ishmael and **My Ishmael** by Daniel Quinn. The novels are a duology of intriguing conversations between a gorilla-Ishmael and two students – the reluctant and reserved Alan Lomax, in the first instalment and the twelve-year-old resolute Julie Gerchak, in the sequel. The intertwining of social and environmental problems is best explained using the ecocritical principle- Bioregionalism. The difference between the 'regions' governed by the human dictates as opposed to the natural dictates is concretized when we contrast the Leaver and Taker ideas of 'Territory'. The realization that the earth is limited in both space and its resources is primary to the Leaver lifestyle and predominantly ignored in the Taker lifestyle. The greatest achievement of our race has been to keep 'food' under lock and key owing to which, we create absurd territories and make settlements, which do not depend on 'food or mates' as in the case of the Leavers. What if the human world requires no sense of order just as the natural world? Could symbiotic cooperation and nonviolent social anarchism between the natural and social communities offer a possible solution? Let us find out.*

**Keywords:** Social Ecology, Bioregionalism, Leaver, Taker, Social Anarchism.

Ecocriticism is an approach to literature where our 'reflected actions' are judged and criticized; it helps us understand an 'interconnectedness' to appreciate the ways, values, and qualities of nature. In this manner, the Ishmael Duology is an adventure of the mind and spirit: *Ishmael*- The novel deals with the odyssey of Alan Lomax to find out a new and the true meaning of life by consciously giving up the old habits of thinking. It chronicles the conversations between him and a gorilla called Ishmael. Alan Lomax undergoes a metamorphosis and has a revolution in standpoint.

*My Ishmael* is a wonderful continuation of the saga of re-interpretation our place and role in the Web of Life. When Ishmael had placed an advertisement for pupils with "an earnest desire to save the world", he does not expect a child to answer him. However, twelve-year-old Julie Gerchak is undaunted by Ishmael's reluctance to teach someone so young, and convinces him to take her on as his next student. Ishmael knows that he cannot apply the same strategies with Julie as he used with his first pupil, Alan Lomax- so he changes his game plan. This sequel is a further critique of the ramifications of our civilization traps.

Both novels abound with a Deep Ecological Consciousness. It is an earth-centred approach to literature than a man-centred one. The foundations of deep ecology are the basic intuitions, namely: 'Self-Realization' and 'Biocentric Equality'.

The intuition of biocentric equality is that all things in the biosphere have an equal right to live and blossom and to reach their own individual forms of unfolding and self-realization within the larger Self-realization. This basic intuition is that all organisms and entities in the ecosphere, as parts of the interrelated whole, are equal in intrinsic worth (Devall 66-67).

Hitting very close to home is Social Ecology, a wonderful parallel to Deep Ecology. Social Ecology believes in the deep ecological consciousness, but first one must redefine the status of man taking a non-teleological perspective. We are not the 'self-consciousness' of this earth. In this respect, Gary Snyder represents a blend of Deep Ecology and Social Ecology. He believes that the 'social ideal' is found in decentralised economics, politics, and culture of Bioregionalism. He has developed an anarchistic perspective that is fused with Buddhism. His ecologically influenced metaphysics is characterized by Relational Holism, in which individuals, their interrelationships, and the whole of nature are valued. Thus, the universe is not evolving towards greater complexity—with humans having any special role.

...bioregionalism is not just environmentalism, not just a means toward resolution of social and economic problems, but a move toward resolving both nature and society with the practice of a profound citizenship in both the natural and the social worlds (Snyder, A

*Place in Space: Ethics, Aesthetics, and Watersheds* 235).

The basic insight of social ecology is that social and environmental problems are intertwined, as are their solutions. We need to consider the human society and the transhuman world of nature together. Social Ecology emphasizes the freedom of all beings to pursue their natural fulfillment. This freedom is not chaotic, but self-organizing.

Let us see how this is true by considering two different stories narrated by Ishmael:

We are all quite familiar with Culture's version of human history. This version is perpetuated by Mother Culture (as opposed to Mother Nature) as Ishmael would call it. We have become destroyers of the earth because we have been driven by a fundamental misunderstanding of how the earth works and of our place in it, which Ishmael would call the Taker mythology:

The world was made for man to conquer and rule, and under human rule it was meant to become a paradise (Quinn, *Ishmael* 82).

In addition, we will continue to be the destroyers of the earth as long as this misunderstanding prevails.

Contrary to this is the story enacted by the leavers (the tribal people, nomads etc...) which submits itself to the law of diversity and the law of limited competition. By taking from nature according to their needs and not from greed, they play a very important role in the sustenance of the rich biodiversity of nature.

The Two Stories:

The Leaver story:

The story the Leavers have been enacting...isn't a story of conquest and rule. Enacting it doesn't give them power. Enacting it gives them lives that are satisfying and meaningful to them (Quinn, *Ishmael* 147).

As opposed to, *The Story of the Takers*:

The story the Takers have been enacting here for the past ten thousand years is not only disastrous for humankind and for the world, it's fundamentally unhealthy and unsatisfying. It's a megalomaniac's fantasy, and enacting it has given the Takers a culture riddled with greed, cruelty, mental illness, crime, and drug addiction (Quinn, *Ishmael* 147).

Snyder's Anarchism is an integration of Buddhism, environmentalism and radical politics. He introduces the concept of the Indra's net fusing it with the Huayan school of Buddhism. In the Huayan school of Chinese Buddhism, which follows the Avatamsaka Sutra, the image of "Indra's

net" is used to describe the interconnectedness of the universe. In this image, the universe is considered to resemble a vast web of many sided and highly polished jewels, each one acting as a multiple mirror. In one sense, each jewel is a distinct entity, different from all others. However, when we look at a jewel, we see nothing but the reflections of other jewels, which by themselves are reflections of other jewels and so on in an endless system of mirroring. The result is a single field of mutual interaction among distinct elements in the field. Snyder notes that the Huayan Buddhist philosophy sees the world as a vast interrelated network. This is exactly what Ishmael tries to prove to Alan Lomax and Julie Gerchak.

All is one and at the same time all is many (Snyder, *The Old Ways* 9)

An individual is distinct from others not in being independent from them, but in being constituted by a unique set of those interrelationships with others and a unique position in the field. This perspective can be called 'relational holism' for it simultaneously affirms the primacy of relationships among particulars and the primacy of the whole. This is what Leaver lifestyle is all about.

The three main points of Snyder's Relational Holism include:

1. The individual and the whole are upheld and any attempt to make one primary or fundamental is rejected.
2. Everything is valuable-that's the measure of the system. It undercuts hierarchy and domination.
3. It is an alternative image of a political ideal. Consider the image of an organism:

The imagery of a marvelous complexity, working on many levels, in pathways too delicate to be grasped, and doing this in a totally uncanceled way. No center. No visible source of authority (Snyder, *Regenerate Culture* 17).

This could be understood by noticing the importance given to Bioecionalism in the novels. **Bioregionalism** is a civilization of wilderness: where we are in tune with the local ecosystem and essential needs of humans. The emphasis on the local ecosystem is central to Snyder's 'bioregional ideal'. Unlike the abstract and arbitrary political divisions of the provinces and nations, Bioregionalism looks to natural divisions created by natural abiotic factors like climate, topography, river drainages and so on.

The world is places (Snyder, *The Practice of the Wild* 25)

We need to become intimate with the distinctive particularities of each place. Nature and Culture can co-

exist. None is superior to the other. Every part is the whole of parts and in turn a part of a whole.

An Individual in isolation does not have intrinsic value or only 'wholes' have intrinsic value.

Good of the whole is inseparable from the realization of the good by all the internally related parts of that whole (Clark, *How Wide Is Deep Ecology?* 199).

Bioregionalism embodies the dialectic between Nature and Culture. The larger natural world is seen as an active co-participant in the creative activities of human beings. Bioregional politics expands our view of the political, by associating it more with the processes of ecologically grounded cultural creativity and with mutuality, cooperative process of self-expression on the part of the human community and the larger community of nature (Clark, *Municipal Dreams* 179-180). Region against Regime, any regime. There is no concept of a capital here. Capital requires scarce resources, but the region is superabundance, provided we use it right. In a bioregion, there are only sources and the return to those sources.

A bioregion is a part of the earth's surface whose rough boundaries are determined by nature rather than human dictates, distinguishable from other areas by attributes of flora, fauna, water, climate soils and landforms, and the human settlements and cultures those attributes have caused. The borders between such areas are usually not rigid-nature works with more flexibility and fluidity than that-but general contours of the regions themselves are not hard to identify, and indeed will probably be felt, understood or sensed, in some way known to many of the inhabitants, and particularly those still rooted in the land.

The difference between the 'regions' governed by the human dictates as opposed to the natural dictates is concretized when we contrast the Leaver and Taker ideas of 'Territory'. A fundamental understanding of 'territory' is to comprehend the fact that the earth is limited in both space and its resources, which is primary in Leaver lifestyle and predominantly ignored in the Taker lifestyle. For the Takers, there exists a 'territorial fallacy'. The greatest achievement of our race has been to keep 'food' under lock and key owing to this we create absurd territories and make settlements which do not depend on 'food or mates' as in the case of the Leavers, for,

A human group will tend to start out by finding a territory for themselves – a place to call their own. They carve out a piece of real estate and say, 'This territory is ours, and we'll defend everything in it' (Quinn, *My Ishmael* 82).

On the contrary the Leavers go out looking for food and mates and they draw a circle around themselves that says, "The resources inside this circle are taken and will be defended" (*My Ishmael* 82). If the resources disappeared, then the Leavers would simply find another place. Though there are tribal settlements, still they do not really worry about acreage or land value as the Takers do. On the contrary, Taker settlements destroy the habitats of many species to establish a 'land of their own'. When we establish settlements, we tend to ignore pockets of forests leading to something called as 'Islandisation'. We are now going through a simplification of the ecosystem resulting in an impoverishment of a number of species. Another danger of Takers 'territorial fallacy' is over-harvesting. This is what happens when 'regime' takes over 'region'.

### Social Anarchism and the Politics of Economy

Let us learn from the Leavers who follow a 'support wealth system' which is to 'give support and get support', each one looking out for the other as opposed to the 'product wealth system' of the Takers which is based on 'make products and get products', a system that works well for the economy but not for the people (Quinn, *My Ishmael* 173-175). The Leaver wealth system takes us back to the actual meaning of the word 'wealth' which is 'wellness' a 'root word', which we seem to have conveniently forgotten. We are not able to understand the Leaver 'support wealth system' because of a basic misunderstanding. The world was made for man to rule and under his rule, it was meant to become a paradise, but since we are a race fundamentally flawed, we are not able to achieve it yet. However, we do not give up; we keep trying until we succeed. This mad destiny has done us enough damage. However, man is not an enemy of the world.

Man, by nature is not an enemy of this world, in other words, we are not destroying this world because of some fundamental mistake in us, but because we at war with the world and try to exempt ourselves from the basic laws of diversity and limited 'competition and growth' (Quinn, *Ishmael* 135).

Let us now trace the story of the Takers according to Ishmael. The birth of man was a central event – indeed *the* central event – in the history of the cosmos itself. From the birth of man on, the rest of the universe ceases to be of no interest, ceases to participate in the unfolding drama.

The Takers regard the world as a sort of human life supporting system, as a machine designed to produce and sustain human life (Quinn, *Ishmael* 59).

The danger in this story, which is retold by Mother Culture, is that, we believe that the world belongs to us and not the other way around. Man, then, is the apex of all creations; but how far has this civilization worked for us? The Gods let us rule the earth, so we are definitely superior to other creatures. In addition, man had to fulfil his destiny to become fully human. Assuming this premise, we believe that we are in complete control of this world.

Ishmael explains to Alan Lomax about the 'free fall' we indulged in ten thousand years ago with the help of a story. The takers while trying to achieve powered flight did not begin by understanding the laws of aerodynamics. Instead, we built contraptions, pushed them off the sides of cliffs, and hoped for the best. As the flight begins, all is well and the airman pedals away to glory. However, what he does not realize is that the craft is aerodynamically incapable of flight. However, his excitement makes him forget this. He does not realize that he is an unsupported object falling toward the centre of the earth. He is not in flight but in free fall. Unfortunately, he had chosen a very high cliff from which to launch his craft. However, his disillusionment is a long way in time and space. Therefore, he does not realize the imminent danger. Looking down into the valley, he seems to realize that he doesn't seem to be maintaining his altitude. In fact, the earth seems to be rising up toward him. However, he is not worried about it just yet. After all, his flight has been a complete success up to now, and there's no reason why it shouldn't go on being a success. However, the ground is now rushing up toward him in an alarming way. That craft is doomed-and so is he unless he abandons it.

Here is the connection, Ishmael says:

Ten thousand years ago, the people of your culture embarked on a similar flight: a civilizational flight. Their craft wasn't designed according to any theory at all. Like our imaginary airman, they were totally unaware that there is a law that must be complied with in order to achieve civilizational flight (Quinn, *Ishmael* 107).

This law is the 'law of limited competition', the law of conservation, preservation, sustenance which is the central goal of the natural world. However, we didn't even wonder about it. We wanted the freedom of the air, and so we pushed off in the first contraption that came to hand: the Taker Thunderbolt.

At first, all was well. In fact, all was terrific. The Takers were pedalling away and the wings of their craft were flapping beautifully. They were experiencing the freedom of the air: freedom from restraints that bind and limit the rest

of the biological community. In addition, to that freedom came marvels such as urbanization, technology, literacy, mathematics, science. We thought our flight would never end, we couldn't know, couldn't even have guessed that, like our hapless airman, we were in the air but not in flight. We were in free fall, because our craft did not comply with the law that makes flight possible. However, our disillusionment is far away in the future, and so we keep pedalling away. Like our airman, we also see strange sights in the course of our fall. We see the remains of the craft like our own-not destroyed, merely abandoned. 'Why', one wonders, 'are these craft on the ground instead of in the air? Why would any people prefer to be earthbound when they could have the freedom of the air, as we do?' It's beyond comprehension, an unfathomable mystery. We delude ourselves with absurd faith in our craft.

What is the problem with our craft then? What is the fundamental defect? Quinn in his novels *Ishmael* and *My Ishmael* states the real reason behind our failure. The problem begins with the locking up of food. The Leavers enjoyed their leisure and worked for a few hours a day to produce their favourite food, but the Takers made it full time, and owing to this, there was a tremendous increase in food produce, which is directly proportional to the increase in population. The excess supply was stored and this led to accumulation. Then, guarding the stored food became an industry of its own and later it was kept under lock and key further complicating the process. Thus, a basic requirement becomes a farfetched entity. This gave rise to the Taker 'Economy' which works well for the products (product wealth) and not for the people.

So, how does one proceed from here? While we cannot look forward to see a global human social system that works really well, we can look back to one that worked really well. We need to visit our past to consider our future. We then identify a system that had worked so well for the tribal peoples. It is still working in undisturbed pockets of this globe. There are no complex organizations there and 'no one right way for people to live'. Bearing this in mind, we need to revolutionize our thinking to reach across. Quinn in his novel *My Ishmael* gives us a Seven-Point Plan for this attempt to reach across which he calls as the 'New Tribal Revolution':

One: The revolution won't take place at once.

Two: It will be achieved incrementally, by people working off each other's ideas.

Three: It will be led by no one.

Four: It will not be the initiative of any political, governmental or religious body.

Five: It has no target end points.

Six: It will proceed according to no plan.

Seven: It will reward those who further the revolution with the win of the revolution (Quinn, *My Ishmael* 218).

These points are only a step towards reaching across; the actual freedom is far away. However, for a race that has not given up on fulfilling an absurd destiny with no hope whatsoever can definitely work towards enriching this world's biodiversity and the sustenance of this planet as a whole where the world no longer belongs to us but we belong to the world.

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## REVISUALIZING MOTIVATION THROUGH AN ECO-STORY: INTEGRATION OF ICT IN TBLT IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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### Abstract

Motivation is one of the salient determinants of second or foreign language acquisition. Task motivation has acquired tremendous attention in L2 learning research in recent times. The integration of ICT in TBLT is pedagogically meaningful because it suggests that teachers can promote their students' motivation in L2 teaching or learning. Short story is one of the various ways used as task which serves as a wealth of ESL skills and greatly augments the proficient and fluency of the learners. It aggrandizes students' motivation and offers convenient contexts to facilitate learning. The task involves the Eco-short story, 'The Man Who Planted Trees' by Jean Jiano and the Canadian short animated film of the same story directed by Frédéric Back. The methodology includes: the comprehensive reading of the short story, projection of film, interaction, discussion, clarification and use of questionnaires. The scholar utilizes the Likert-scale and the SPSS tool using "t-test" to analyze the components of motivation, ICT in TBLT to assess the freshman of Loyola College, Chennai. The objectives of this paper include the motivation of the students to acquire new vocabulary, syntactical structures, and pronunciation and to empower them in their proficiency and fluency of English language.

**Keywords** Motivation, TBLT, ICT, SPSS, t-test, short story, film/movie, L2, EFL, SLA

### Introduction

Motivation is one of the salient determinants in second or foreign language acquisition. English as a lingua franca asserts a vital significance as the medium of communication, instruction and curriculum in the modern world. It is upheld to be either a second or a third language in India. The technological and innovative methodologies implemented effectively and efficiently can make the teaching-learning of English language more comprehensive. In the post-modern era technology thrusts upon the teachers as well as the students various challenges and responsibilities and opens up a horizon of possibilities for drastically revolutionizing a paradigm-shift. The integration of ICT in TBLT is one of the means of both linguistic and social transformations. Graddol (1997:16) states that, "technology lies at the heart of the globalization process; affecting education work and culture. The use of English language has increased rapidly after 1960. At present the role and status of English is that it is the language of social context, political, sociocultural, business, education, industries, media, library, communication across borders, and key subject in curriculum and language of imparting education". ICT is implemented in this experiment for the effective and efficient visual and auditory stimulation for motivating students in English language teaching and learning.

### The Scope of the Study

The main goals of this paper include: motivating the students in acquiring new vocabularies, syntactical structures, and correct and native pronunciations; enabling them in their proficiency and fluency of English language through LSRW; and making them aware of how an eco-story can be a great source of L2 learning. The following questions were formulated in order to achieve the objectives for the study: Is integrating ICT in TBLT more effective in acquiring language fluency and proficiency? Does ICT motivate one in developing language skills-LSRW? Does short story through film method aid the efficacy of language learning? Does Eco-story inculcate eco-consciousness among learners to love nature? Does short story through technology empower and enhance communicative skills? Are stories great motivating tools in learning language? Can vocabulary, pronunciation, syntax be learnt through ICT effectively? Does ICT create positive attitude and motivate students in L2 and EFL acquisition? Is *The Man Who Planted Trees* a great Ecological story? Are ICT and TBLT motivating techniques in L2 learning and acquisition?

### Methodology

The methodology involves the reading of the short story, *The Man Who Planted Trees* by Jean Jiano followed by the projection of the Canadian short animated version of

the tale directed by Frédéric Back. There are three different phases involved in conducting the experiment – pre-task, task and post-task. The scholar utilizes the Likert Scale and the SPSS tool 't-test' to analyze the components of motivation, ICT in TBLT to assess the freshman, which includes 30 Economics and 10 Commerce students from Loyola College, Chennai as sample for the research.

### Motivation-ICT-TBLT Interface

The word motivation is coined from the Latin 'movere' which means to move. It is defined as an internal drive that activates behaviour and gives it a direction. It is a multifaceted construct. Motivation could be instrumental or integrative. Dörnyei and Otto defined motivation as, "the dynamically changing cumulative arousal in a person that initiates, directs, coordinates, amplifies, terminates and evaluates the cognitive and the motor processes whereby initial wishes and desires are selected, prioritized, operationalized, and acted out" (1998: 64). Task boosts learners' motivation in L2.

Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT) seems to have emerged from Communicative Language Teaching (Brown 2007), but Kumaravadivelu says that it is a completely new approach to teaching and learning language (2006). 'Task' is defined differently by scholars. Prabhu defines task as "An activity which required learners to arrive at an outcome through some process of thought, and which allowed teachers to control and regulate the process" (Prabhu 24). Some common characteristics of 'task' are as follows: The primary focus of task is on meaning; A task has some kind of lacuna; A task is close to real life situation; Completion of task is important; Learners need some linguistic resources to complete the task; Task gives ample opportunity to learners to practice the target language and; A task has a clearly defined goal or outcome. ICT integrated with task enables language learning more interesting and effective.

Information Technology and Communication (ICT) has a variety of definitions. Generally, ICT refer to computer, and internet technologies such as smart phone, WhatsApp, Facebook, Skype, YouTube, iPod, Ipad, twitter etc. that have transformed and revolutionized the teaching and learning of English language. ICT enriches the collection, storage and handling of information in the form of digital data such as text, speech, sound, images and films. The historical background renders a clear and deeper understanding of the development of motivation theories in Second Language Acquisition (SLA).

The aim of this research into language motivation briefly highlights three phases that the field has undergone. The first is the social-psychological period which focuses on the macro-perspective language learning. It deals with affective factors in intergroup relations. The second phase concentrates upon the learners' micro-context of the classroom and the cognitive processes underlying language learning. In the third phase, there are emergences of different themes such as unconscious, dynamic, affective and long term aspects of motivation to learn English and other languages. The overview of these three phases certainly contributes extensive understanding of motivational theories.

Gardner spearheaded the social-psychological period with his associates in Canada. The basic assumption of this research is that there is a difference between learning L2 from other school subjects because it demands openness of the L2 group and willingness to adapt elements from it. Integrative motivation is the outcome of this concept. Gardner (2010) divides the history of his own research into three phases: ancient history (1945-1972), early history (1970-1980), and modern history (1980). These three phases led to the development of socio-educational model by Gardner and others who assert four different aspects of learning process: social milieu, individual, acquisition context and outcomes. Motivation is an act of integrativeness, attitude towards the learning context and instrumentality. Gardner also discovered four stages of L2 development: elemental, consolidation, conscious expression, automaticity and thought. Gardner's approach focused mainly on the macro-level analysis of the interrelationship between social and contextual variables followed by the classroom oriented research until the second period.

Gardner's integrativeness which was considered as an affective factor led to the new phase starting from 1990s which is described as *cognitive-situated period* (Dörnyei and Ryan, 2015). Dörnyei attempted to explore its cognitive underpinnings through reinterpreting it into ideal L2 self. According to Dörnyei (2005), this theory comprises of two trends: First one puts the focus on many different aspects, namely the students' own perceptions of their own abilities, and limits and their potentiality in learning of a foreign language. The second trend highlights the broad view of motivation for all societies accepted by the followers of the social psychological approach should be reduced to the classroom learning environment, which represents the real environment in which foreign language learning takes place. There are different motivational theories prevalent in

this period, they are as follows: Self- Determination theory: According to Deci and Ryan (1985), when people are motivated, they aim to achieve something and take on goal-oriented action to fulfill it. McDonough (1989) claims that attribution theory is, "the most cognitive and non-mechanistic theory" (147). Expectancy-value theories by Oxford & Shearin (1994) assert that individuals take part in activities which are seen as instruments to achieve some valued ends. In self-efficacy theory, it is believed that students' academic performance is strongly influenced by the judgments they have about their own capabilities to organize and fulfill the action (Mills, Pajares and Herron, 2007). Need theories or *hierarchies of need* (physiological, safety, social self-esteem and self-actualization) are developed by Maslow (1962). Equity theory is concerned with "equity, which is characterized by a mathematical ratio of inputs to outcomes" (Oxford and Shearin, 1994:19). The reinforcement theory is for the establishment and maintaining of behavior for increasing and sustaining the frequency of behavior acts as the first element. Examples of reinforcement may include verbal and written praise, or rewards.

This period emphasizes on the "ongoing changes of motivation overtime" (Dornyei, 2005: 83). Dornyei and Otto (1998) express that students' degree of motivation fluctuates over time. In a single lesson, the reason for this change of motivation degree might stem from the nature of the activity or teacher's behavior practices. Therefore, they produced a theory which focuses on explaining the dynamic feature of motivation. This aspect has been investigated by a process-oriented approach. Dörnyei (2005) explains that this theory "can account for the daily ups and downs of motivation to learn" (83). Since learning a language takes a very long time, it is important to take into consideration its temporal character. This process model of L2 motivation puts the motivation process into three phases, pre-actional phase (choice motivation), actional phase (executive motivation), and post-actional phase (motivational retrospection). The effort of reinterpretation of integrativeness in cognitive light brought forth L2 Motivation Self System (L2 MSS, Dornyei, 2005). The L2 MSS consists of the ideal L2 self, the ought to self and L2 learning experience. The L2 MSS is grounded on two theories: discrepancy theory (Higgins, 1987), and possible selves theory (Hazel Markus and Paula Nurius, 1986). The above motivational theories deepen our understanding of the concept and indeed the integration of ICT in TBLT makes a radical change in L2 learners. In 2003, Carol Chappelle declared that

the bond between technology and language use in the modern world should prompt all language professionals to reflect on the ways in which technology is changing the profession of English language teaching in particular, and applied linguistics as a whole. (1)

ICT has become an innovative means of language teaching and learning which is the motivating factor for both teachers and students. Warschauer (1999) finds that students have positive attitudes towards using computers for writing and communication. In modern world, access to various social networking and websites are available in English and they motivate students tremendously when task is implemented in classroom situation. Long (1989) underscored the significance of task in L2 learning, stating "it would be more useful to analyze, research, and evaluate the tasks to discover the features that promote language teaching and learning" (1). Doughty and Long (2003) asserted that TBLT is the theoretically motivated approach, making L2 learning and teaching efficient. Dornyei (2003) claimed that teacher's perception of a task and the ways of presenting and implementing the task in a classroom has enormous effects on the learner motivation which is evident in the experiment done at Loyola College with first year the freshman.

### Classroom Experiment

Short story serves a wealth of ESL/EFL skills and enhances student's motivation and offers convenient contexts to facilitate learning. It assists students to be consciously critical and creative and provides multicultural circumstances. The scholar implemented the short story 'The Man Who Planted Trees' by Jean Jiano and the Canadian short animated *movie of the same story* by Frédéric Back for the task. The scholar executed the different phases of task for achieving the objectives successfully. They were: **Pre-Task:** The scholar instructed the students to read the story leisurely with full comprehension of the new vocabularies, syntactical structures, dialogues between different characters, and to be aware of the contexts in which it was written, for example, the surrounding, and the overarching themes in the story. **(Actual)Task:** The actual task took place in the audiovisual classroom at Loyola College which was equipped with computers, projector and fully functional sound system. The researcher asked a few critical thought provoking questions in order to recapitulate and investigate



the students' comprehension, imagination and interest before projecting the movie. The students watched the film, listened to the dialogues; got acquainted with the syntax, vocabularies and native pronunciations; and observed the settings, characters' gestures, expressions and articulations with utmost care. They made use of the macro skills of listening, writing and speaking. **Post-Task:** After the screening of the movie, there was a brain-storming session followed by interaction, discussion and feedback based on their learning experiences and questionnaires were filled in. The students expressed how they were deeply motivated by reading the story and watching the movie. They felt highly motivated to use technology in task based teaching for learning L2.

### Observation and Inference

The instruments used in this study included ten survey questionnaires focusing on students' motivation, ICT and TBLT designed on a five-point Likert-scale such as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. They were ranked with a value of 5 to 1. The questionnaires were based on the intention to analyze the students' comprehension of how motivation, ICT and TBLT could be competent tools in language teaching and learning and how the short story could also be an effective pedagogical element in language acquisition. The entire set of questions was divided in two groups: (A) Motivation and (B) ICT and TBLT.

**Table 1: t-test with respect to Motivation**

Variables	N	M	S.D.	t
Economics	30	24.43	3.02	0.529
Commerce	10	23.80	3.33	

(N= Total number of students, M= Mean value, SD= Standard deviation, t= value)

### Result and Discussion (Table 1)

There is no statistical significant difference between the two variables: Economics freshman and Commerce when it comes to their motivation level. Both the groups are equally motivated to learn English new vocabulary, syntax, pronunciation and to become proficient and fluent in English.

**Table 2: t-test with respect to ICT and TBLT**

Variables	N	M	S.D.	t
Economics	30	14.77	2.30	0.441
Commerce	10	14.40	2.27	

(N= Total number of students, M= Mean value, SD= Standard deviation, t= value)

### Result and discussion (Table 2)

There is no statistical significant difference between two variables: the Economics freshman and Commerce in implementation of ICT in TBLT. Both the groups feel that integration of ICT in TBLT classroom through the eco-story, tremendously motivates, inspires, excites the L2 language learners and makes it meaningful and valuable. The students also become aware of preserving the ecology.

### Conclusion

Eco-story can be an effective motivational tool to enhance language learning. Motivation is the predictor of language success or failure because individuals choose the task, time duration, and the goal for pursuing it based on their level of motivation. Some scholars feel that L2 learner's motivation has been under-researched within task based framework. Therefore, it would be appropriate and very meaningful to investigate L2 learners' motivation related to pedagogic tasks. Teachers need to create basic motivational climate in order for the learners to have motivation, task engagement and persistence in doing the task. Technology has been overlooked in the motivation field in spite of the rapid technologization of learning and classroom instruction. There is still a need for building bridges between the classroom and the digital activities to make classroom learning more motivating among current learners.

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## ECO JUSTICE IN WORDSWORTH'S THE STOLEN BOAT

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### Abstract

*The paper throws some light on eco justice in Wordsworth's The Stolen Boat. Ecological sensitivity becomes a staple point of discussion in the realm of Green literature. Like God, nature is ubiquitous. A host of writers takes inordinate interest in presenting the various facets of green literature. William Wordsworth is a case in point. In poem after poem, he repeatedly underscores the importance on nature. His poem "The stolen boat" is about eco justice. Eco justice patently means if we love nature, nature, in turn, loves us. If we inherently destroy nature, nature also destroys us. He increasingly experiences an epiphany that changes his glimmer understanding of nature in this autobiographical poem. During a holiday, he happened to see an unknown shepherd's boat. Imbued by a sense of thrill, he could not resist the temptation to steal the boat to an unfamiliar lake. Having stolen the boat, he felt immensely glad to row the boat. While enjoying rowing the boat, he experienced a new surge of feeling that a huge peak mountain peak roared his head. His mind was deeply disturbed and could not enjoy happiness.*

**Keywords:** Ecological sensitivity, Green literature, ubiquitous, epiphany, glimmer understanding,

William Wordsworth is one of the significant signatures in the realm of English literature. He, in general, meditates on the beautiful objects of nature. Impressed and Impregnated by the spirit of The French Revolution, he showed his creative acumen in the dynamics of his writings. A school of thought says William Wordsworth has a leaning towards nature. He is passionately interesting in exploring the various objects of nature in good standing with pantheism. In generic sense, nature is god's deputy. It is a source of inspiration for ever so many poets. Almost all romantic poets take ownership in stressing the importance of nature. Wordsworth's stature as a poet is diametrically different from other poets in his treatment of nature. Unlike his contemporaries, he steadfastly believes that there is an indwelling divinity pervading all the beautiful objects of nature. Moreover, he has a realization of the fact that human beings must grow in the lap of nature. His poetical creeds show that his love of nature is something unique. In poem after poem, he repeatedly focuses his attention on nature's restorative powers. Since he believes in the education of man, he goes to nature for solace. The stolen boat is taken from The Prelude. The Prelude is an important book in the canon of romantic literature. Since the poem is taken from The Prelude, the whole poem forms one stanza. The poet nostalgically remembers an incident from his childhood. He, at the outset, asseverates that

One summer evening [led by her], I Found  
A little boat tied to a willow tree  
Within a rocky cave, its usual home.  
Straight I unloose her chain, and stepping in  
Pushed from the shore. It was an act of stealth. [1-5]

The poet adroitly admires the beautiful objects of natures in its entire splendour. While he is in a state of excitement, he finds a little boat in a rocky cave tied to a willow tree. Upon seeing the boat, he cannot resist the temptation of getting into the boat. Hence, he makes it a point to loosen the boat in a swift and secret manner. It is rather a thrilling experience for him to steal the boat in the spur of the moment. Having stolen the boat, he happily experienced the joy of rowing the boat without worrying about his act of stealing. Though he felt a prick of consciousness, his sense of guilt was inadvertently intermixed with the feeling of pleasure. His act commingles pleasure and guilt. He thinks that someone else is following him.

Interestingly enough, the little boat left small circles of water gleaming idly under the radiance of the moon until all of them were mixed up and disappeared giving way to one single track of glittering light. The poet develops a consuming interest in praising the little boat and regards as "an elfin pinnacle". He, however, shows his dexterity in rowing the boat to reach straight to a particular spot without any reservation. The poet's lovely boat gives the impression of having a fair like appearance. He dipped the oars strenuously into the silent Lake and as he rose up after the stroke to move it forward. He keeps on rowing the boat but he has a conviction inside that he is being followed by something else in the form of huge shape. He is alarmed by the outbreak of the huge shape. His boat moved from behind that uneven range of the high hill which had so far seemed to him to be the boundary of distant horizon, a huge and black peak pit its head up, as if it were a living being endowed with a will and a power of its own.

He continued to row on over the calm lake but slowly growing larger in stature the awful peak with its towering height seemed to stand between the poets and the stars. It seemed to the poet as if the peak was a living creature following him with regular steps with some fixed purpose of its own. With the oars trembling in his hand, he felt an irresistible impulse to change his course and moved on silently over calm surface of the lake to be back to the shelter of the willow tree. He hears the voice of mountain echoes as he tried furtively to push the boat without making any sound.

In the light of his subjective experience, it is an eye opening experience for him to understand the power of nature. He also realises that nature is an emblem of god. The act of Stealing has been deeply ingrained in his mind. He has some hesitation in wiping out the incident. For him, mountain was not a passive structure made of rocks and stone. It was like a living being but different living being. His mind was deeply disturbed by that incident. Rowing the boat was perhaps a life changing experience for him to understand the healing power of nature. In fine, he realises the fact that if we love nature, nature too loves us. If we destroy nature, nature also destroys.

It is to be noted that the poem has an important bearing on the theory of Ecocriticism. Hence, the poem can be analysed through the lens of eco critical theory. It is an apt poem for eco criticism for the reasonable reason that it

throws a modicum amount of light on the burning issue and the attitude of modern man in the present literary scenario. Modern man fails to take up ownership in preserving the beautiful objects of nature. Green literature gives new spectrum to environmentalism. In the new millennium, we live in a cutthroat competitive world where our environmental equilibrium is in great peril due to human activities. The importance of preserving nature is recorded in the realm of literature. Eco criticism is a literary theory that talks about the relationship between literature and environment. It says that there is a common ground between literature and environment. There is a pressing need to protect nature for the welfare of younger generation. When a human being becomes mature enough to understand the beautiful objects of nature, it would be possible for him to understand the nuances of environmental equilibrium. Preserving nature is the need of the hour.

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## PURSUIT OF SPIRITUALITY THROUGH MOTHER EARTH IN HENRY DAVID THOREAU'S WALDEN

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### Abstract

*The novel taken for the research is Walden by Henry David Thoreau. The novel explores the boundless sacredness in human beings through almighty mother Earth. The quest for spirituality throughout the novel makes one to realize mother Earth is our almighty god. The novel portrays the simple life of author in the wilderness as a companion of solitude. The novel throws light on comparison between Mother Earth and almighty God. The study focus on the true meaning of life in the wilderness where one will feel that they are part of nature. In the novel, mother Earth plays a pivotal role in spiritual journey of human beings. Mother Earth results in exploring the insight of one's spiritual quest and act as a quintessence of holiness. Into the wilderness, which was remained untouched by our hands will brings us the state of solitude state without material prosperity. There is a sensual delight through the vision of nature. One who lives in the midst of nature will feel intimate relationship with nature and that arouses divinity within us. Pursuit of spirituality attains its state when we observe mother Earth close to our heart.*

**Keywords:** *Into the wild; Spiritual insights; Solitude; Almighty nature; Walden Pond; Oneness with nature.*

The novel *Walden* focuses on the search of spiritual insights and meaning of life and love. Henry David Thoreau himself the central character of the novel carefully brings out the spiritual quest in him while he was alone in the Walden Pond. He serves as a guide to start a new life in the woods. Thoreau had deep faith in mother Earth, almighty God. Thoreau feels that God communicates not through religious way but directly through mother Earth. The simple life style of Thoreau in Walden is fine natural art. The idea of man in a state of perfect isolation implied the thoughts of humankind. Thoreau believes that wealth is not as important as spiritual well being and he sees utility and value of life in the natural world.

Thoreau took bath in Walden Pond every morning and he felt it like a religious exercise and admits that it is the best thing he did in the woods. He is a worshipper of Goddess of dawn, Aurora. There is a spiritual awakening while he was in the woods In Walden Pond he feels oneness with nature and as a part of his own soul. To him, when a man does not believe that each day has sacred early hour, he will not undergoes the spiritual journey. The following lines show his spiritual rebirth in woods:

Every morning was a cheerful invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself. I have been as sincere a worshipper of Aurora as the Greeks. I got up early and bathed in the pond; that was a religious exercise, and one of the best things, which I did. (79)

Thoreau's intelligence does not make him to live in the Walden. It is in the way of using intelligence as Edward de Bono says in his book *Intelligence is not enough*. He points out "Intelligence demands the intelligent use of intelligence. (62) Some may feel only intelligent people succeeds in their attempts. However, Edward de Bono statement of the way of using intelligence is an example for smart act of Thoreau in woods.

Thoreau does not need human society to live and he is obsessed with nature. Thoreau constructs his cabin in July 4, 1845 on Independence Day when he got independence from human society. He begins his cultivation in bean fields. Thoreau believes Walden Pond as a metaphor of spiritual belief. The Walden Pond represents heaven and water represents heavenly purity in mother Earth to humankind. For Thoreau, he is not alone in the wilderness. Instead, he is gifted with lots of animals and birds near Walden Pond. They are his companions in solitude. He used to hear their mesmerizing sounds while he was in Walden Pond. Thoreau use personification to the birds and animals in the wood and consider them as his companions in solitude. The following passage shows about his companions in solitude:

To walk in a winter morning in a wood where these birds abounded, their native woods, and hear the wild cockerels crow on the trees, clear and shrill for miles over the resounding earth, drowning the feeble notes of the other birds- think of it! (111)

Henry David Thoreau states that "Life in us is like the water in a river" (279). The following questions will make us to feel the world is full of absurd especially in destroying natural sources. What we are doing in the name of digital life? Where shall we found spontaneous overflow of water? Will science provide us food, water, air, and natural resources? Where our wastes are dumping? He just presents that without nature human beings will not survive. Everything is interconnected in the world. He does not want to trap in the human society, which makes him to feel life as absurd. He feels out of harmony in the human society. Henry David Thoreau wants to protect mother Earth from brute human society and he feels mother Earth as sacredness. Thoreau adds that "Why should we live with such hungry and waste of life? We are determined to be starved before we are hungry. Men say that a stitch in time saves nine, and so they take a thousand stitches today to save nine tomorrow". (83)

Whenever Thoreau is feeling lonely, suddenly his mood swings in the midst of gentle rain in the woods. Thoreau's spiritual journey in the midst of woods makes him feel better than what he was in human society. He identifies his two types of nature as spiritual and animal. In woods, he was spiritual in nature by living close to his heart. Thoreau found pleasure in the woods where mother Earth provides lots of sensual delight. He feels mother Earth as God and knows the meaning of life. He went to woods to live deliberately in the midst of harmony. By experiencing nature, Thoreau feels spiritual awakening in him. He became a part of nature in the woods.

The world is not only for humans. Human beings are not the centre of universe and every species in the earth had own equal rights, food, water, air, shelter, and dignity. We are all sons and daughters of nature and we need to protect our mother from the creatures that are keen to abuse her. We need to save our mother earth from destruction, contamination, and exploitation. Pam Houston in his *Waltzing the Cat* states that "For the people of my country, Renato said, water is everything: love, life, religion...even God". Akira Kurosawa in his work *Yume* portrays the harsh realities of contemporary world's bond with nature. The following quote is about human beings absurd way of life against mother Earth:

People today have forgotten they're really just a part of nature. Yet, they destroy the nature on which our lives depend. They always think they can make something better. Especially scientists. They may be smart, but most don't understand the heart of nature. They only invent things, in the end, make people

unhappy. Yet they're so proud of their inventions. What's worse, most people are, too. They view them as if they were miracles. They worship them. They don't know it, but they're losing nature. They don't see that they're going to perish. The most important things for human beings are clean air and clean water. (64)

Thoreau wants to explore the wilderness, which is untouched by human society to feel the spiritual insight through mother Earth. Thoreau represents Walden Pond as mirror and almighty nature as representations or feelings of humans. When Thoreau stepped into the wild, he had spiritual rebirth in mother Earth. His pursuit of spirituality comes through by close observation of nature. Simplicity will make oneself attached to mother Earth and connect the soul to Nature. Thoreau feel holy divinity is in the presence of nature. Thoreau portrays his intimate relationship with nature:

Men frequently say to me, "I should think you would feel lonesome down there, and want to be nearer to folks, rainy and snowy days and nights especially," I am tempted to reply so much-This whole earth which we inhabit is but a point in space. How far apart, think you, dwell the two most distant inhabitants of yonder star, the breadth of whose disk cannot be appreciated by our instruments? Why should I feel lonely? is not our planet in the Milky Way? (115)

Thoreau lived in Walden Pond in Concord, Massachusetts for two years from 4 July 1845 to 6 September 1847. According to Thoreau, nature is the foundation of integrity and a replica for humanity. He feels there is a connection between human beings and mother Earth. Thoreau feels independent freedom from human race when he takes bath in Walden Pond. There is a spiritual connectivity in the woods. Whatever he does, he needs to rely on natural sources. The novel portrays the intimate relationship between mother Earth and Henry David Thoreau. It is almost a spiritual autobiography. He does not like non-vegetarian food, as he finds it is as an obstacle to spiritual purification.

Now, Thoreau talks about health. He says that there are many natural resources as medicines. However, human society falls in the prey to modernization, which produces only instant relief and side effects. The following lines show the importance of the natural resources in the woods:

What is the pill, which will keep us well, serene, contented? Not my or thy great-grandfather's, but our grandmother Nature's universal, vegetable, botanic medicines, by which she has kept herself young

always, outlived so many old Parrs in her day, and fed her health with their decaying fatness. (120)

Only the faint rattle and a carriage in a distant highway interrupt Thoreau's spiritual meditations in the afternoon. He feels that his whole body is in one sense and absorbs delight through every pore. He had a strange liberty in the woods and he is a part of mother Earth. He is comparing himself to be favoured by God than other fellow human beings. Without nature, human beings will not survive in mother Earth. Chinese philosopher Confucius in his *Doctrine of the Mean* says that:

"How vast and profound is the influence of the subtle powers of Heaven and Earth!"

"We seek to perceive them, and we do not see them; we seek to hear them, and we do not hear them; identified with the substance of things, they cannot be separated from them."

They are everywhere, above us, on our left, on our right; they environ us on all sides." (116)

Sarah Joseph shows God's presence in nature in her novel *Gift in Green* as "We need to find God, and he cannot be found in noise and restlessness. God is the friend of silence. See how nature - trees, flowers, grass - grows in silence; see the stars, the moon and the sun, how they move in silence...We need silence to be able to touch souls." (98) The bond between water and human beings in Aathi is shown vividly in Sarah Joseph's novel. People of the village Apathy have hope on their almighty God, mother earth. People of Aathi are the children of soil and their heart melts when their mother was abused in front of them. To cleansing water is like to cleansing of one's own souls. Water is referred to a goddess to the people of Aathi. The following lines compare water with god:

Water is not merely a means of washing away dirt. Since the inscrutable mysteries of life are encoded in it, we must deem water equal to God. It is water that people are baptized into spiritual vitality. Universally, water is reserved as the eradicator of sin. None except the man who can grow a fish on dry land can claim the right to ruin water. (160)

A walk through the woods makes Thoreau to feel rebirth. He believes that water is the only drink for a wise

man. The pure Walden Pond water is interconnected with the sacred water of the Ganges in India. He states that "If the day and the night are such that you greet them with joy, and life emits a fragrance like flowers and sweet-scented herbs, is more elastic, more starry, more immortal-that is your success. All nature is your congratulation, and you have cause momentarily to bless yourself. (183) He carries less religion to the table and asks no blessing. He believes nature as almighty God. Thoreau leads simple life in the woods. The house has one room that contains kitchen, chamber, parlour, and keeping room.

In the woods, Thoreau never felt alone. For the whole part of the time he spends in the woods, he is in solitude. He loves to be in solitude. He found that he had no companion that was as companionable as solitude. Thoreau adds, "Solitude is not measured by the miles of space that intervene between a man and his fellows". (117) He did herculean labour in the woods while he cultivating bean fields. The work was steady and self-respecting to him. Those backbreaking labours made him attached to the mother Earth. He compares his strength to Antaeus, whose strength came from the Earth. He praised mother Earth as it has certain magnetism in it and by which it attracts salt, power, or virtue, which gives it life. Personally, I believe in God, not in religion and to me God is almighty nature.

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## THE ENVIRONMENTAL ASPECTS IN SUH JOON KIM'S POEM, "BAKING A FOREST"

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### Abstract

*Literature and environmental studies, known as "eco-criticism" or "environmental criticism", aims to explore the environmental dimensions of literature. Its scope has broadened rapidly from nature writing, Romantic poetry and canonical literature to take in film, television, theatre, animal stories, architecture, scientific narratives and an extraordinary range of literary texts. Poetry which has a strong ecological emphasis or message is eco-poetry. This journal determines the relationship between literature and the physical environment from the poem "Baking a Forest" by Suh Joon Kim. One of the chief characteristics of eco-poetry as defined by James Engelhardt is that it is connected to the world in a way that implies responsibility. As with other models that explore and assumes engagement, "Eco-poetry is surrounded by questions of ethics." John Burnside and Mario Petrucci cite eco-poetry as a means of describing poetry or poetic project that embrace the ecological imperative for personal sensitivity and social change. The paper explains the beauty of nature and as with other models that explore and assumes engagement, "Eco-poetry is surrounded by questions of ethics."*

**Keywords:** *Baking, environment, planting, preserving, eco-poetry.*

### Introduction

Suh Joon Kim, also known as Sun Joon-yeong of South Korea is a poet and an actor by profession. He got his education in Inha University and has been active in his profession since 2004. He is best known for his roles in award-winning indie "Bleak Night", period drama "Deep Rooted Tree", coming-of-age film "Eighteen" and comedy series "Super Daddy Yeol".

The poet has mainly explored the love and nature condition prevalent in the world at that time. Many publishers refused to get his writings printed fearing harsh consequences. Even though his poems attracted negative reviews, he has seen a good response with the social activists and readers across the globe. His poem, "Baking a Forest" deals with the ecological issue of global warming where the entire forest is facing extreme heat. The process of the Earth getting heated up, is compared to the procedure of baking and thus the ingredients used for making a cup-cake are compared to the elements and organisms found in the forest. This is a simple description he got from a gardener, and turned it into a poem in his memory. He still gardens his yard and protests to stop global warming and destroying nature.

### Environmental Elements in the Poem

The poem begins with the final garnishing done on cup-cakes before it is served. In the first stanza, the poet brings out the importance of planting new trees and

compares it with sowing seeds and growing trees. The sowing is done by sprinkling the seeds and this action is compared with the sprinkling done on the cup-cakes to make them look attractive.

The next stanza completely throws light on the needs of a plant to grow healthily. The natural environment and its importance is visualized by the accompaniment of moisture, sunlight, heat, animals and birds. These are the things available in the forest where the plants and trees grow.

'Spray a little water, it should not be too dry.  
Add a little sunlight, but not enough to fry.  
Add a few animals, birds would be great,  
and leave it alone, until you accept your fate.'

The third stanza deals with the contribution man can make towards restoring the environment. Even though this process would be very little when compared to the damage done by him, still it would work for the betterment of Nature. Even when we as human beings have forsaken the damage done to the environment and have added on to the harms done against it, there is still a faint ray of hope which shines on the committed wrong and thus it becomes the saving grace where we are granted another opportunity to give back what we have used up.

'A single gift given for what you took,  
One trillionth of payment for returning what you  
forsook.  
A ray of light still shines on the caused sin,



A last chance to help nature, the planet and kin.'

This, being our last chance to help nature, will in the larger picture help our planet and the ecology to move on smoothly. Once all this is done, we can sit back and relax and smile upon the outcome that is to come as a result of our contribution towards the rebuilding of the environment and safeguarding it from further deterioration.

### Comparison between Baking and Gardening

Certain words bring out the comparison between baking and planting or gardening very clearly. Verbs such as 'sprinkle', 'add', 'clean up', 'spray', 'leaving it', and finally 'look' relates both with the actions done in relation to cooking as well as gardening.

Spray a little water, it should not be too dry.

Add a little sunlight, but not enough to fry.

Add a few animals, birds would be great,  
and leave it alone, until you accept your fate.

The poet subtly argues that preserving the environment is parallel to relishing a good snack/meal and is one of the immediate necessities of our life. It is high time we realize the seriousness of it and act accordingly. This poem really moves the minds of the readers. The issue that this poem covers is an important thing that needs attention and should be taken seriously.

The title "Baking a Forest" seemingly juxtaposes two different and unrelated things together, but the poet effortlessly connects the action done within the kitchen to that of gardening which is done outdoors. This title successfully arrests the attention of the reader and focuses on the main issue of increasing temperature in the environment. Thus, the poet brings out the message of preserving the environment before it gets too late.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the poet through his nature poem considers nature as his subject matter and inspiration projecting forth the importance to preserve the forest as though it was something which was a part of our lives. Suh Joon Kim tries to awaken the minds of the readers towards a better future and suggests that our small contribution towards the preservation of the forests and our single move towards afforestation will help the future generations.

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## ECHO OF ECOCRITICISM IN THE ROMANTIC SAINT WILLIAM WORDSWORTH

*What are poets for? Is poetry a representation of reality or merely the decoration of life?*

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### Abstract

Countering earlier interpretations of Romantic constructions of Nature as a mere screen for the human imagination, the pioneering ecocritical studies emphasize the ecological dimension of romantic understandings of the natural world and humanity's place within it in the context of an Increasingly global environmental crisis. Ecocriticism today seeks to address perennial questions concerning the relationship between man and nature and elucidates what contributions the Romantic-era writers have made towards a holistic understanding of the natural world. This paper analyses the eco critic in one of the outstanding Romantic poets, William Wordsworth, tracing the origin of modern scientific conception of ecology that considers the world as a harmonious self-regulating system, as early as the eighteenth century.

**Keywords:** Romanticism, Ecocriticism, Nature, Ecological crisis, William Wordsworth

In an era of impending threats to the global environment the emerging discipline of ecocriticism is engaged in a vital revision of the fundamental task of poetry. William Wordsworth's poetic mind evolves from an immediate sensation of pleasure in natural objects toward a more mediated response to recombine objects of perception. His poetry is regarded as an evocation of lived experience. Perennial questions concerning the relationship between human kind and natural world has become one of the most important terrains of the development of ecological literary criticism. Any creation is the outcome of a deep disturbance in the mind, a resultant force that originates from sensitivity beyond perception. One of the distinct approaches to interpret literary works from an ecological perspective involves exploring the rootedness of a poem to particular place. Such writings are possible only from the lived experience of writers who are firmly grounded in a particular place.

The most renowned amongst the Romantic Saints, William Wordsworth, is ineluctably associated with the Lake District. Critics have observed that with his mature poetic voice, his words entail engaged participation and a detailed description with vivid sensory imagery. Wordsworth learnt more about life and Nature not from books but from his sojourn in the outside world. One of the

well known environmentalists Lawrence Buell stipulates three distinct conditions for a poem to be considered as an environmental text.

First and foremost, the presence of the nonhuman should suggest that human history is implicated in natural history. Poets with their deepest roots in the home soil reveal their lived experience and attachment to the place. In this context, Lake District and Wordsworth's attachment to the place is vividly clear in his works. Secondly, the ecological text involves the study of the history of ideas. The development of the concept of the "wild Nature" with particular reference to William Wordsworth can be cited in "Stepping Westward" – describes a walking tour by the poet into one of the loneliest parts of the Scottish Highlands. Anticipating Thoreau's characteristic emphasis on wildness the poem evokes travel to the West as "a wildish destiny". In this context Wordsworth proves to be eminently eco centric. Rigby argues, "Romanticism remains inspirational in its resistance to that severing of the natural from the human sciences, matter from spirit, reason from imagination." Contemplative wandering into the boundless realm of the unknown is one of the distinctive themes of Wordsworth. His poem "Daffodils" is another example which reveals his choice to wander all alone, only to be captured by the sight of a host of golden

daffodils and then imagination runs wild as he describes them to be tossing their heads in a sprightly dance.

*"For oft, when on my couch I lie  
In vacant or in pensive mood,  
They flash upon that inward eye  
Which is the bliss of solitude;  
And then my heart with pleasure fills,  
And dances with the daffodils."*(19-24)

This is an evidence for resistance to severing of 'imagination from reason'. The sudden shock of mild surprise in the presence of unexpected natural beauty pervades his poetic language, imagery and ethos.

A third ecological approach might be termed "existential" as it seeks to elucidate history of environmental consciousness from within the imaginative experience of poetry. Wordsworth is one of the poets placed within the intellectual contexts of his era. The rocks, stones and trees form the irreducible subject matter of poetry. This existential approach bears evidence to the affinity with the location, where it examines the way the natural phenomena are transformed into linguistic artefacts.(12) The poet's contributions to 'Lyrical Ballads' are not all nature poems, if that is to denote a detailed description of natural objects. Solitude is common in most of his poems where his engagement with his imagination creates an unmediated experience. "Expostulation and Reply" is explicit with the most significant conversation when one is alone.

*"---Then ask not wherefore, here, alone  
Conversing as I may,  
I sit upon this old grey stone  
And dream my time away"* (29 – 32)

Wordsworth's poems in "Lyrical Ballads" entitled "The Tables Turned" explore a conversation that is possible between the human mind and the objects of the natural world. The transforming light of the sunset enables the poet to perceive something other than the cold hard objects of Newtonian science. The critique of the book learning is explicit in the lines

*Sweet is the lore which nature brings,  
Our meddling intellect  
Misshapes the beauteous forms of things  
We murder to dissect* (25-28)

The final stanza of "The Tables Turned" dismisses both science and art exhorting the reader to engage in a very different kind of seeing and knowing.

*Enough of knowing science and art  
Close up those barren leaves,  
Come forth, and bring with you a heart*

*That watches and receives* (29-32)"

Contrary to the misconception of preoccupation with place in "first wave" ecocriticism as occluding a concern with social justice, Bate demonstrates how Wordsworth exemplifies place as a Romantic. He discloses the entwinement of destructive forms of environmental change with social structures of domination in the context of development of more capital- intensive modes of agriculture. Wordsworth's post pastoral poem "Michael" – breaks with earlier pastoral convention by shifting the focus from the peace and pleasure afforded the jaded city dweller by a sojourn in the country to the depredations caused by the incursion of capitalist financial relations into rural world (7). Wordsworth himself remained deeply concerned about the future of the Lake District as its environmental integrity became threatened by the encroachment of wealth, industry, and modern lifestyles and his later writings show a growing understanding of the complex ecological interrelationship between people and the places they inhabit. (69)

Wordsworth's poetry brings forth deep insights concerning the close linkages between our inner "wild" nature and our collective behaviour, as a society toward the natural world. The poet's depiction of home in "The Female Vagrant" reveals a great deal of the poet's attitudes and beliefs about the best way of life in a rural community. The poem speaks about a broad range of domesticated plants in the poet's garden including edible peas, aromatic herbs and ornamental flowers and a great variety of tame and wild animals. Wordsworth describes how "several of the Lakes in the north of England are let out to different fishermen in parcels marked out by imaginary lines drawn from rock to rock" (Lyrical Ballads, 72n) "these imaginary lines" define an individual's right to take fish from a lake that is a common property of the local village. The most notable feature of the lifestyle depicted in this poem is its reliance on multiple modes of subsistence – vegetable gardening, poultry-farming, sheep-raising, bee-keeping and fishing.

The subsistence mode of agriculture appears to be entirely sustainable in the long term and in fact such a mode of production, based on a widely varied set of crops rotated annually, eked out by fishing, livestock-raising and the seasonal gathering of nuts, berries and firewood from village common areas had persisted relatively unchanged throughout rural England since the middle ages. This is certainly an idealized pastoral quality in Wordsworth's description. Such a subsistence lifestyle was more sustainable than more modern methods of agriculture

which typically rely upon the intensive cultivation of a single crop, year after year, and provide very little recourse in the event of crop failure. However unreal such a lifestyle may appear we may safely assume that it is on the whole, accurately drawn from Wordsworth's own memory of rural life as he observed it during his childhood on the banks of the river Derwent.

The traditional methods of subsistence were gradually supplanted by more capital-intensive modes of production and the common areas of local farming that relied on seasonal grazing and gathering activities were increasingly withdrawn for exclusive private use by the process of enclosure (63). Wordsworth describes how the incursion of a wealthy land owner, who purchases and encloses all the surrounding properties eventually, drives out the poems protagonist and her father from their hereditary land. This wealth intruder erects "a mansion proud our woods among" (line 39) and by denying access to these local woods, withdrawing the right to fish in local waters, ultimately succeeding in evicting the father and daughter from their humble cottage. Their traditional rights of access to the lake, woods, and other common areas were not respected by the wealthy intruder, who took "no joy... [to] stray/Through pastures not his own" (41 to 42) since the common rights are generally matters of local tradition rather than the father and daughter have no legal recourse when their rights usurped by their wealthy neighbour.

Despite the changes in his political orientation, Wordsworth remained consistent in his opposition to what we might term the military-industrial complex as it affected the traditional ways of life in rural England. The poet opposed development and improvement of rural landscapes and remained a staunch defender of sustainable agricultural methods, traditional rural architecture and all of England's open scenic and wild areas especially in the Lake District (65). The last poem in Lyrical Ballads "Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" mentions-

*Wreathes of smoke  
Sent up in Silence  
From among the trees (18-19)*

This is evidence enough to substantiate on the ecocritical aspects that had permeated the thoughts of a worshipper of Nature, a Romantic saint to speak of eco grief as early as the eighteenth century to warn the world of the eco threat and sharpen their ecolect to save the world from global despair. For, the world might go without the beauteous green; the vibrant shades; the aromatic divinity in the blossoms; as the itinerant charcoal-burners are engaged in converting wood into charcoal for use in local iron foundries. This poem stresses on the peaceful co-existence of human habitation and wildness in the same landscape. He celebrates the endurance of wild natural beauty even in the midst of intensive human experience.

In conclusion, the fact that the other than human world confronts unwarranted challenges in the consumerist era, ecological activists and humanists and great thinkers try their level best to make consumerism need based and repress greed, to motivate the aspiring humanity to strengthen intelligence and endurance; to protect Nature, with little or minimal use promising sustenance for generations to come. William Wordsworth's words of appreciation of Nature and his warning bell from the ecological perspective will ring timelessly encouraging regreening of the despoiled earth by way of reimagining Nature.

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## EXPLORATIONS ON THE THEME OF 'HUMAN AND NATURE' IN SELECT AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL FOLKTALES

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### Abstract

The research article titled "Explorations on the theme of 'Human and Nature' in Select Australian Aboriginal Folktales" probes into the unity and indispensable relationship between human and nature through the analysis of the Eco-friendly portrayal of landscapes, flora and fauna and their association with human beings in Select Australian Aboriginal Folktales. The Ecocritical reading of these folktales of Aboriginal people of Australia has retrieved the lost Earth-Centered values and beliefs systems, which were once adopted by various tribes of Australia back in the Dreaming. Thus explicating on the interconnectedness between human and nature, this research signifies the indigenous cultural importance to the intrinsic values of nature. The value of existence has been attributed to all forms of life and the human's responsibility to safeguard that value has been incorporated in the analysis of these Aboriginal folktales. As a concluding remark, it also insists on the current generation to adopt the Environment-friendly life style of Aborigines, that is, to take what is needed to sustain life without exploiting it, in order to live in harmony with nature.

**Keywords:** Human and Nature, Earth-Centered, Indigenous culture, Dreaming, Interconnectedness.

### Explorations on the theme of 'Human and Nature' in Select Australian Aboriginal Folktales

The United Nations Organization in 2015 announced '17 Sustainable Development Goals to Transform the World' as the blueprint for achieving sustainable future as part of the 2030 Agenda; of which, such Goals as 'Sustainable Cities and Communities', 'Responsible Consumption and Production', 'Climate Action', 'Life Below Water', 'Life on Land' revolve primarily on every Human's contribution to protect the Nature around him/her despite their geographical, political, economical, social and cultural differences. This shows the global need to protect the degrading nature to ensure sustainability in human life. In this research, the Ecocritical explorations into the select Australian Aboriginal Folktales expound on the interconnectedness that exists between human and nature by evaluating the life and culture of the Australian Aborigines in their land Australia, in order to reinforce the sustainable living.

Garrard in his book *Ecocriticism* defines Ecocriticism as "the study of the relationship of the human and the non-human, throughout human cultural history and entailing critical analysis of the term 'human' itself" (5). This emphasizes the vital role of Ecocritical studies in projecting the co-existence of human and nature. It is also evidently stated by Glotfelty that "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 non-human" (XIX). This outlook gives the scope for this research to illustrate the interdependency between human

and nature in the oral folktales of Australian Aboriginal people.

William Rueckert defines Ecocriticism as "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature" (Glotfelty and Bloom XX), to which Glotfelty adds that it includes all possible relations between literature and the physical world (Glotfelty and Bloom XX). The fundamental premise of ecological criticism, as estimated by Glotfelty in his book *Ecocriticism Reader*, is that "human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it" (XIX). This also proposes the idea that the cultural values of indigenous tribes of Australia have always has the profound effect on their environmental-friendly life style.

The aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of Australia, who were believed to have been migrated to Australia before 50,000 years from Asia. Though this historical fact is yet to be proved, some say that the migration took place even before. Their history conveys that they had lived a nomadic life settling on the river banks and coastlines of Australia. This land was first discovered by James Cook in 1788 and it was called as 'terra nullius', a Latin term meaning 'land belonging to no one' (Brittan 73). Alice Brittan in his essay "Australasia" points out that the Aborigines were incomprehensible about the idea of treating land as a private property, to be bought and sold, or to be owned (74) and to them Land was "sacred, indivisibly connected to physical, imaginative,

and spiritual life, no more a commodity for sale than a parent or child" (74).

The concept of 'Dream Time' or 'First Time' describes the stories from the Period of Creation. The Dreamtime stories are the verbal forms of the spiritual Dreaming, which comprises of art, customs, music, totems, lore, and lands ((McKay XV). The official Australian Government website further adds that, "Because the ancestors did not disappear at the end of the Dreaming but remained in these sacred sites, the Dreaming is never-ending, linking the past and the present, the people and the land". The Aboriginal people's devotion towards their land is evident even in recent times, as the Aborigine Tom Dystra affirms, "We cultivated our land, but in a way different from the white man. We endeavoured to live with the land; they seemed to live off it; I was taught to preserve, never to destroy" ("Australian Indigenous cultural heritage").

The stories from Dreaming includes the creation of all living forms and they attribute human's characteristics to the landscapes, flora and fauna in these folktales which rather reflects their culture and belief systems associated with the surrounding ecology. These stories are more than myths, legends, fables, parables or tales as they cover up various topics implicated in the stories.

The Aboriginal people are very much aware of their prehistory and so they have developed strong connection to their land. The tale of 'The Beginning Island' is a creation story of Tasmania and of the great South stars, Moinee, Dromedene, Beegerer and Priminer (which were later called as Sirius and Betelgeuse). As it comes under the category of 'creation map stories', this story had documented the geographical changes that took place during the Creation or DreamTime. It includes the melting of icebergs which had later transformed the landscape of present Tasmania into heart-shaped island with the creation of gum trees and the species of shellfish occupying the surrounding water bodies. This ecological changes were believed to have been created through the mythical characters Pernuen(the Sun) and Vena(the Moon) as per the traditional belief. The above said facts about their land were passed on to the next generation through this oral folktale.

Aborigines were able to live off the land without degrading it. In the creation story of 'Lumerai, the Mother Snake', the nature has been considered as the Mother of all creations. It is a Rainbow serpent Creation story from the Northern Territory, which represented the creation of various geographical features like winding rivers, great lakes, billabongs, waterholes, lush green rainforests,

mountain, hills, valleys, oceans by the Great Mother Snake back in the Dreaming. In this story the Mother Snake represented as the Great Ancestral Spirit were believed to have taught the men and women of Australia, to respect the Earth and every creature on their land. At the end of the story, the Mother Snake had also warned them not to take more than what they needed, 'through greed or for pleasure'. This shows that the aboriginal people had never exploited their land as per their tribal lore.

The folk tale of 'The Murray God', a Creation map story from the Murray River basin on the border of New South Wales and Victoria, tells the birth of a great waterway Murray River. Two brothers were sent by the Great Spirit to stop the ongoing destruction of land by the monster Murray Cod. As a result of their chase the river was believed to have formed. This story had represented the landscape of Lake Alexandrina of the present day which had been turned into the home for various fresh water fishes like pomeri (mudfish), tarki (a flat silver fish), kundgulde (butter fish), and mallowe (Murray mouth salmon) (McKay 43). This folklore had instructed these people not to destroy their land.

Uluru, which is known as Ayer's Rock is a world renowned spiritual symbol of Australia, surrounded mainly by desert (McKay 6). The story of 'Boomerang: Alinga, the Lizard Man' shows the birth of the aborigines' spiritual place called Uluru. Here the people attributed lizard, the reptile, to the cult hero back in the Dreaming, who's lost Boomerang had been turned into huge sand rock. This tribal lore of Uluru rock symbolizes their spiritual tradition attached with the nature.

'The Birth of the Butterflies', a story which was originated from New South Wales shows the beautiful landscape of Tongala River. The landscape represented in the story had a cool water and shade of the red river gum tree. The inhabitants of this landscape include the cockatoo, owl, eaglehawk, crow, kookaburra, the moths, water bugs and caterpillars. The flora of this landscape includes the waratah, shrubs and the wattle. This tale had recorded the transformation of caterpillars and insects into the variety of butterflies and moths due to climatic changes on their land. This folklore is also suggestive of Aboriginal people's nomadic life style in and around the water resources. Their sense of fraternity with their fellow tribes had been portrayed here.

The Australian Aborigines were known for their unique survival instinct, because of which they have had overcome many challenges posed from adverse climatic situations like droughts, flood and storms. The story of

'How the Kangaroo got her pouch' carries the significance of being generous in helping others even at the time of crisis in one's own life. Here the storyteller blends the human value of kindness with the act of Kangaroo's help to the thirsty old wombat. As the reward of the kindness, its race was bestowed with the external pouch to carry their young ones, by the Great Spirit. It briefly highlights the aboriginal people's survival skill in tracking down the water sources during the times of drought. It also briefs about the people's knowledge about the danger sensing skill of Kangaroo.

The folktale of "Pikkuw, the Crocodile", a story from the Cape York Area of Northern Queensland, tells about the punishment given by the Great Spirit to the man called Pikkuw, who belongs to the tribe living along the river banks up in the Cape York Area for misbehaving with the married woman. From that river was born the first Crocodile, none other than Pikkuw, as the result of the punishment for going against the tribal lore. This shows that these people had strict moral codes in their tradition. The tale of 'The story of the Didgeridoo' from Northern Territory tells about the first sacred wind instrument of aborigines which has the sounds of nature in it. It was made out of the hollow branches left by termites by the brave warrior Yidiki back in the Dreaming. These tales shows the people's close association with the nature.

The totem system or taboos for each individual was identified at their birth or later as the part of their tradition to prevent them from killing certain animal species. So they were looking at mammals, fishes or birds as the sacred gifts from their ancestral Spirits. That's why they didn't kill platypus as it was considered sacred. The practice of totem system was established by the ancestors to insist the people about the spiritual connection between human beings and the natural world (McKay 15-19). The folktale of 'The Special Platypus', a story from New South Wales describes the special features of the Australian fauna, the Platypus and other water creatures. Platypus is said to be the explorer of the underworld. This story identifies emu as the fastest species to run on the land and echidnas as a special creature with spiky body. All the other animals in this environment had given special place to Platypus, which is suggestive of the totem system that has been followed in their tribal culture.

The tale of 'The Bunyip in the Forest' has its natural setting in the big, deep rain forest, where the family of a father, a mother and two children has been living without disturbing the surrounding forest. The landscape of this story describes the big, deep waterhole in the thick forest and the presence of evil Bunyip in the waterhole deep

inside the forest. It represents the inhabitant of that land. The warning to their children in the tale shows that they never have had intruded the forest unnecessarily.

By establishing the strong cultural and spiritual connection between the Australian Aborigines and their land through the analysis of representation of the landscapes, flora and fauna in the Aboriginal folktales of Australia, it can be put forth as a 'calling' to the present generation to look back at their past peaceful life with the beautiful nature.

As in the works of Bill McKibben's "The End of Nature" where he argues on the present state human and nature that "We have changed the atmosphere, and thus we are changing the weather. By changing the weather, we make every spot on earth manmade and artificial. We have deprived nature of its independence, and that is fatal to its meaning. Nature's independence is its meaning; without it there is nothing but us" (Garrard 70). The modern human beings have been losing their natural landscapes without realizing the fact that they are exploiting their very survival on earth. To renew that connection with nature at present, these Aboriginal folktales of Australia show the possibility of leading a modern life with re-establishment of Earth-Centered values, which is composed of one idea that 'to take what is needed to sustain life without degrading it' (McKay 15).

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## FROM TOPOS TO OIKOS: AN ECOFEMINIST STUDY OF KALIDĀSA'S ABHIJÑĀNA ŚĀKUNTALAM

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### Abstract

*This paper explores the possibilities of reading one of the most renowned plays of classical Sanskrit literature, Kalidasa's Abhijñāna Śākuntalam, from an ecofeminist perspective. The juxtaposition of the world of the hermitage and the world of the court in the play brings out the essential difference in the nature-human relationship in the two worlds. The heroine Śākuntalā is placed in a harmonious relationship with nature in the first Act of the play. This harmony is disrupted by the intrusion of the world of the court in the form of King Duṣyanta. The subsequent dislocation of Śākuntalā into this masculine world takes her further away from her rightful world, the world of the hermitage, only to cause a fragmentation in her personal as well as social identity. This fragmentation is healed in yet another world – that of the second hermitage – in the play. Beginning with a brief survey of various paradigms within which the relationship between Śākuntalā and nature has been studied across centuries, the paper would look at this cycle of integration–dislocation–integration in terms of the affinity shared with the world of nature (in a feminine mode of relationship) dislodged by the patriarchal impulse which seeks to control nature/woman. This woman–nature relationship will be studied in the context of what Yi-Fu Tuan calls topophilia, “the affective bond between people and place or setting.”*

**Keywords:** Ecofeminism, topos, oikos, topophilia, interanimation

The play *Abhijñāna Śākuntalam* by Kalidasa has received critical attention across centuries; it is perhaps amongst the most discussed and critiqued texts the world over. Right from the early centuries of the first millennium, when the play is believed to have been written, up to the 21<sup>st</sup> century, critics have found many new areas of interest to be explored in the play. If the early Indian critics and theoreticians (between the 8<sup>th</sup> and the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D.) studied the play within a literary framework, exploring the aesthetic and dramaturgical dimensions of the play, contemporary scholars have adopted strong socio-cultural positions such as liberal humanism, anti-colonialism, feminism, and New Historicism. Some prominent exponents of the former are Anandavardana, Abhinavagupta, Dhananjaya, (all three aestheticians, who cite instances from the play to illustrate aesthetic conventions) and Raghava Bhatta (author of a greatly acclaimed commentary of the text) and those of the latter are Bankimchandra Chatterjee, Rabindranath Tagore, and, more recently, Romila Thapar.

While enough has been said to hold the play up as the best specimen of classical Sanskrit dramaturgy, the continued interest in the play shows that the possibility of newer perspectives emerging from the play, has, by no means, been exhausted. This paper seeks to carry forward a conversation about the play that was initiated in the 18<sup>th</sup> century with the ‘discovery’ and translation (1798) of the

play by William Jones, and the subsequent translation (1856) by Monier Williams, and kept alive in the years preceding the Indian Independence in essays written by Bankimchandra Chatterjee (1887) and Rabindranath Tagore (1907). This has been reinvigorated by Romila Thapar, in her deeply insightful book *Śākuntalā: Texts, Readings, Histories* (1999), which offers much scope for further debate and discussion. In this book, unlike the other authors mentioned above, Thapar does not offer a personal re-interpretation of the play, but rather looks at the textualisation of Śākuntalā through narration and interpretation from the Vedas down to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. While all these writers have looked at the depiction of nature and nature–woman relationship in the play from a sociological or moral perspective, this paper attempts to extend these discussions in the direction of ecocriticism and, more specifically, ecofeminism. A nascent ecocritical slant is perceptible even in the essays on the *Śākuntalam* written by Tagore and Bankimchandra Chatterjee and Thapar's book-length study brings this out explicitly though it is not the focus of the study. This paper attempts to place the play firmly within the framework of ecofeminism, seeking to study the cycle of union–separation–reunion – an oft-studied motif – in spatial terms, largely drawing from Yi-Fu Tuan's discussions on space.



The 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century translators of the play, William Jones and Monier Williams, were heavily influenced in their reading by the popular literary and aesthetic movement of the era, Romanticism, in its German as well as English avatars. The translation, as William Jones claims in the Preface, was undertaken in order to make the text known to the Western world as a 'curiosity': "[I] prepared a faithful translation of the Indian drama, which I now present to the publick as a most pleasing and authentic picture of old Hindu manners, and one of the greatest curiosities that the literature of Asia has yet brought to light" (ii). Jones's Śakuntalā, both the play and the heroine, are charming since they evoke an uncomplicated relationship with nature. Śakuntalā, then, is the Indian counterpart of the rustic child-woman one often encounters in Wordsworth's poems. She is easily conflated with the image of Wordsworth's Lucy, an artless rustic girl, living a verdant life in the lap of nature, representing, in her simplicity and unspoilt beauty, all that is noble and virtuous in the nature of the human race. That the foundations of this image are to be detected in the idea of the 'noble savage' attributed to Rousseau – though the phrase is, in fact, never used by him – is almost a literary commonplace. In her essay, "The Celestial Fruit of Collected Virtues: A Reading of William Jones' *Śakuntalā*", Shampa Roy shows how this close association between Śakuntalā and nature is then easily extended to establish the sweeping generalisation that all women, and Indian women in particular – 'primitive', in the Romantic sense of the word, because of both ethnicity and gender – are close to nature: "Also ever so often the king in Jones' translation calls Śakuntalā 'a rustic girl' or 'my rural charmer' – her 'rusticity' a cardinal element of her attractiveness meant to suggest a kind of Rousseauistic charm. . ." (68). Here is encountered, perhaps for the first time and definitely very early on in modern readings of Śakuntalā, the recurring essentialising of the woman–nature relationship which, in a very simplistic manner associates nature and women with innocence, pristine purity and passivity. The basis of the nature–woman association in these is patriarchal rather than ecocritical, since they foreground a passive congruity and not an active inter-relation.

This engagement with the role of nature in the play is carried forward by Monier Williams, who, translating the play almost at the cusp of the Romantic and the Victorian Ages, is in raptures about Kalidasa's excellences, especially in Act IV. However, his interpretation of the play's heroine shows a mild departure from the position adopted by William Jones. In his Introduction to the

translation, he highlights Śakuntalā's antecedents with reference to her biological father Viśvamitra and, thereby, her "pedigree", rather than her association with her foster father Kanva and her life in the hermitage amidst nature (qtd. in Thapar 231). His pre-occupation is also with appropriate and inappropriate sexual and social behavior, on the part of both Duṣyanta and Śakuntalā. Romila Thapar sees this as a shift in emphasis from the binary opposition between nature and culture, associating Śakuntalā clearly with nature that is exploited by culture, to an erasure of nature from the picture altogether with culture emerging triumphant: "Nature and culture were no longer in oppositional juxtaposition, for nature had receded and the mores of culture were triumphant, and would gradually become essential to assessing the actions of Śakuntalā" (232). Thapar traces a close connection between this pre-occupation with the "mores of culture" and the Victorianisation of Śakuntalā in subsequent readings of the play even by Indians themselves. It is from this time that the idea of Śakuntalā's "fall from grace" and subsequent redemption gradually becomes an important pre-occupation in readings of the play.

In these important 20<sup>th</sup> century readings of the play, which construct Śakuntalā (along with Sitā and Sāvitrī) as the ideal for Indian womanhood, the first union of Śakuntalā and Duṣyanta is seen as a hasty and passionate one, leading them to neglect their appointed duties, exemplified by the deputing of Madhavya by Duṣyanta to perform a ritual and the lapse on Śakuntalā's part to extend customary honours to Durvāsa. Both Bankimchandra Chatterjee and Tagore placed the play firmly within the framework of the four Purusharthas – dharma, artha, kama and moksha – frequently alluded to in Hindu philosophy and aesthetics. That the two protagonists allowed kama an unbridled reign, allowing it to supersede dharma, is seen as the cause of their subsequent separation and suffering. They are finally united – this time as mature, responsible co-travellers on the path of dharma (*saha-dharma-cara* and *saha-dharma-carī*). In an essay comparing the play with Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, and more specifically, the two heroines, Śakuntalā and Miranda, Tagore calls Śakuntalā "one of the creatures of the forest" (242) and "this child of the forest hermitage" (246). He establishes very close links between her and the space she inhabits while, at the same time, hinting at the conflict that often characterises the relationship between external nature and human nature: "A forest hermitage is a place where nature and contemplation, beauty and restraint are united. It is not

bound by the artificial dictates of society, but the stern law of dharma rules there. The ritual of the gandharva marriage is of the same order. It displays the intractability of human nature, but also the social tie of marriage" (239). Tagore sets up a three-pointed opposition here – not just between nature and culture as exemplified by social laws – but among nature, divine law (one of the meanings of dharma), and the artificial dictates of society. It is ironical that he places the hermitage firmly in nature, yet admits the metaphysical/social/ethical categories of contemplation and restraint into it. To him, as to traditional scholars, the fifth Act, where the lovers separate, encapsulates a disjuncture between kama and dharma, this dramatic and spiritual fragmentation being healed and made whole when the lovers reunite in Act VII, as a consequence of repentance and knowing themselves and each other aright; the play, thus, "unites earth with heaven" (251). There is a moral homily to be preached here: "What comes easily to hand is also easily lost: what is grasped by infatuation falls to the ground when the grip slackens. That is why the poet made Dushyanta and Śakuntalā undertake long and arduous meditation, that they might truly and lastingly gain each other" (247).

Throughout Tagore's reading, external nature seems to be a backdrop, though a fairly active one, to the turmoil of human nature: "Even external nature, in the forest scenes, participates all through in the functions of the mind. Now it submits its own sweet sportiveness to the play of Shakuntala's youthful being; now it mingles its beneficent sighs and sounds with the general benediction; now, through its mute words of farewell, it adds pity and tenderness to the agony of departure and, by its exquisite spell, irradiates Shakuntala's nature continually with a holy chastity and soothing grace" (251). Tagore's Śakuntalā, no doubt, is a child of nature, but only in a very physical sense. The lyrical quality of the relationship between the two is described in poetic raptures. But then, in Tagore's reading, though nature interacts with Śakuntalā, it is not integral to her identity, and this is the issue taken up for study in the last part of the paper.

In the light of ecocritical principles, it can be argued, Kalidasa's depiction of the relationship between nature and Śakuntalā is to be seen as an organic one, with a very close identity being established between the two. The union–separation–union cycle, hitherto seen in moral, ethical and spiritual terms, needs to be studied from an ecological perspective. Śakuntalā's very identity is, from the very beginning of the play, linked inalienably with the space she inhabits. Tuan discusses this association in

terms of topophilia, "the affective bond between people and place and setting" (qtd. in Bryson 11). The operative phrase here is "affective bond" which suggests an integral, inviolable mutuality, that is, for instance, not so evident in comparable ecological concepts such as Keith Basso's interanimation, though Bryson mentions Basso and Tuan in the same breath, implying a similarity between the two concepts. Basso's interanimation is, no doubt, a mutual process of animation, an emotional symbiosis, so commonly encountered in Romantic poetry:

As places animate the ideas and feelings of persons who attend to them, these same ideas and feelings animate the places on which attention has been bestowed, and the movements of this process — inward toward facets of the self, outward toward aspects of the external world, alternately both together — cannot be known in advance. When places are actively sensed, the physical landscape becomes wedded to the landscape of the mind, to the roving imagination, and where the mind may lead is anybody's guess. (qtd. in Bryson 11)

However, there is an important difference between Tuan and Basso. Tuan puts people, on the one hand, and place and setting, on the other, on an equal footing with the conjunction 'between' establishing the equivalence – the two participants are of equal value and validity. On the contrary, Basso, even while acknowledging mutuality, privileges the human mind, attributing it with agency, to which the place merely provides a stimulus – it is still an object of perception, to be "sensed". He does call it a two-way process, but by foregrounding imagination, a human faculty, and connecting it with the mind, which 'leads', he tacitly makes nature a passive partner, as it were. Basso's interanimation appears to be a process between equals; however one entity turns out to be more equal than the other.

Returning to the play with this framework in mind, it is obvious that space in Kalidasa is Tuan's topos. In fact, even before the actual play begins, that is even before Śakuntalā is introduced, the invocatory verse (Prologue 1) propitiates Lord Shiva, not as an anthropomorphic deity, but as one whose visible forms are the natural entities of water, fire, the sun, the moon, space, earth and air. The only exception in this invocation is the human form of the sacrificer. When the play-proper begins, even before we meet Śakuntalā, the king establishes a sense of space in the hermitage and the most important quality of this space evoked by him is the unconscious, entirely natural, ease with which human and non-human life thrives in the hermitage; grains of rice, parrots and deer co-exist with

chariots, indicative of the intrusive human presence that will be commented upon later:

Grains of wild rice fallen from tree-hollows  
where parrots nest, lie scattered under the trees;

.....

All around, deer browse in their tranquil haunts,  
Unafraid of the chariot's approach; . . . (I.13)

This firm establishment of space paves the way for a description of the kinship and identity Śakuntalā shares with the elements of nature around her. She is seen watering plants, not because she has been appointed to do so by her foster father, but because of the kinship she shares with them (176). In the course of the first Act, various aspects of the nature-Śakuntalā relationship are explored, with each instance taking Śakuntalā progressively closer to nature till a complete identity is established. The leaves of the mango tree beckon to her as though desiring a conversation with a close friend (177). This culminates in the superimposition of the images of the navamālikā creeper (named Vanajyotsnā by her) and the mādnavi creeper, on the figure of Śakuntalā. The Vanajyotsnā's twining around a tree and the mādnavi creeper's flowering before its season are indicative of Śakuntalā's impending union with Duśyanta. The relationship here is not one of similarity but of contiguity, not an instance of metaphor, which is a comparison presupposing the existence of distinct entities, but of metonymy, which obliterates this distinction. An explicit super-imposition – one that is simultaneously semiotic and visual – happens when Priyamvadā remarks to Śakuntalā, "With you beside him, the mango looks as if wedded to a lovely vine" (177). This super-imposition progresses even further with the linking of this identification with another pivotal motif of the play – memory (remembering and forgetting). When Anasuyā teases Śakuntalā asking her whether she had forgotten to water the mādnavi creeper, Śakuntalā's response seals the identification with finality: "Then I might as well forget myself" (178).

The first Act then provides us with an almost text-book illustration of topophilia, in which the mode of the relationship between Śakuntalā and nature is a feminine one. In fact, not just Śakuntalā and her friends, but even the male inhabitants of the hermitage, relate to nature in this feminine mode – a mode that is neither exploitative nor violent: the male ascetics stop Duśyanta from hunting the deer in the vicinity of the hermitage, right at the outset of the play. As opposed to this feminine mode is the masculine one, exemplified by Duśyanta, who, as has been repeatedly noted by critics and commentators, hunts

not only deer but also Śakuntalā. His intrusive and predatory instincts are, indeed, curbed, for a while by his respect for the sacredness of the ashram precincts. However, it is evident that he will not be able to relate to nature, at least, till the seventh Act, in the way the inhabitants of the ashram do. Śakuntalā is at home amidst nature; it is both her 'topos' and her 'oikos' – her rightful home.

An oft-noted poignant moment in the fourth Act of the play occurs when the pregnant Śakuntalā leaves the hermitage in the hope (soon to be thwarted) of joining Duśyanta at Hastinapura. Once again, her foster father, Kanva, re-iterates the topophilic relationship that Śakuntalā shares with the precincts of the ashram. Addressing the groves, he says:

She who never had a drink of water  
before you had all drunk your fill,  
she who never plucked your tender buds  
for love of you, though fond of adorning herself,  
she to whom it was a joyous festival  
when you first burst into bloom, she Śakuntalā,  
leaves us today for her husband's home:  
All grant her leave to go. (IV. 11)

The cycle of integration–dislocation–integration is set into motion when Śakuntalā leaves her rightful topos to enter into the world of the court where the masculine mode of relationship with space – one characterised by hierarchy and hegemony – operates. She is violently rejected; her identity as a lawful wife and mother of Duśyanta's legal heir is challenged and she is repudiated. It is here that Śakuntalā's personal and social identity come in conflict with the space she has entered into. Her personal integrity is questioned in very harsh terms and her claims of both wifehood and motherhood are strongly rejected by the king. He castigates her as an immoral woman who falsifies the common notion that 'rustic girls' are artless and testifies to the scheming nature of all women. The king's rejection leaves Śakuntalā broken and wounded, unable to return to her 'forest dwelling' – her personal space – and sent away in dishonor from the court, that could have given her a social space. Tuan establishes the connection between spatial location and social identity thus:

In ordinary usage, place means primarily two things: one's position in society and spatial location. The study of status belongs to sociology whereas the study of location belongs to geography. Yet clearly the two meanings overlap to a large degree: one seems to be a metaphor for the other. (408)

Śakuntalā's identity is whole, secure and uncomplicated as long as she inhabits a space with which she shares an affective bond. The moment she is separated from this space, her identity becomes fragmented, insecure and problematic. It is restored to her in yet another hermitage, that of Mārica. Therefore, the union–separation–union cycle enshrined in the play is to be placed not just within spiritual, ethical or moral frameworks but primarily within an ecological framework. In her Introduction to *Kalidasa: The Loom of Time*, a collection of her translations of Kalidasa's works, Chandra Rajan comments on this cycle at length:

The action of the play *Śakuntalā* moves out of the 'green world' of Nature, set apart and centering around the heroine who is presented as the Lady of Nature, into a gilded world of Duhsanta's palace and pleasure-gardens, and finds its resolution in yet another world – a higher world that is inaccessible to ordinary mortals . . .

The movement out of the green world is accomplished with much reluctance on the heroine's part. When she disappears from view behind a line of great forest trees, the green world, magical, vanishes too . . .

When Śakuntalā leaves the hermitage and the green world vanishes, what remains is 'an empty desert', for she is the Lady of Nature. (45)

So it is not only Śakuntalā who suffers an identity crisis at her departure, but also the world of nature itself which suffers an equal loss, since its identity is intertwined with that of Śakuntalā. After bidding her farewell, Anasuyā and Priyamvadā, observe that they will "be entering the Holy Groves that will be desolate, bereft of Śakuntalā's presence" (228).

In the rejection scene in Act V, where Kalidasa introduces the celebrated motif of the lost ring, there is yet another poignant reminder of Śakuntalā's close bond with nature. Having realised that she has lost the ring given as a token of his love by Duśyanta – a token that would also reverse his curse-imposed loss of memory – Śakuntalā reminds him of a tender moment that they had shared in the hermitage. She seems to be hoping against hope that if the as-yet-unborn child of his does not impel the king to accept her, at least her foster-son, the deer she had reared at the hermitage, would serve as a token of remembrance: Just at that moment, the little fawn, my adopted son, whom I had named 'Liquid Long-eyes', came trotting up. Feeling affectionate towards him, you held the cup out saying, 'let him drink first' and coaxed him to drink. But he would not come near, because you were a stranger to him. When I took the cup from you and held it in my hand, he was

happy to drink. And you laughed saying 'One trusts one's own kind, you are both creatures of the woods.' (238-39)

What we see here, then, is a conflict between feminine and masculine modes of relating to nature. In fact, Duśyanta continues to operate in the masculine mode even after his recollection, in Act VI, of his union with Śakuntalā; his expression of personal grief is articulated in the form of an embargo on the celebrations at the advent of spring. His injunction binds not just human celebration but also natural activity, indicating the hegemonic control he continues to exercise over nature, woman and even fertility/sexuality itself:

The Mango has long since put out its wealth of buds,  
but the pollen does not gather golden within:  
the amaranth is all set for blossom-time,  
but the buds still linger, tight-folded in their sheaths,  
though winter is past, the melodious koel  
strangles in his throat his rich burst of song:  
even Love hovers uncertain, withdraws timidly,  
his arrow half-drawn out of the quiver.

Far from looking to nature for "a soothing grace" to heal his grief, he projects the power of his grief outwards to hinder and strangle procreation in nature. Duśyanta is yet to learn to relate to nature as an equal, which he does in his brief sojourn, in the final Act of the play, in Mārica's hermitage, on his way back from the realm of Indra. When he sees his son Sarvadaman, later to be re-named Bharata, for the first time, the child is forcibly restraining a lion cub. The same Duśyanta, who entered Kanva's forest violently pursuing a deer, now gently admonishes the child for behaviour unworthy of the ashram space:

Why do you act in this wanton manner  
alien to the life of a hermitage  
where the spirit finds its tranquil home?  
Why do you flout that rule of gentleness  
towards all living things, . . . (VII. 18)

It seems that Duśyanta has learnt a vital lesson – that all life forms need to be respected – and, with this, he earns the right to regain Śakuntalā, with whom he is reunited in the course of this final Act.

A question that suggests itself at the conclusion of the play is that of Śakuntalā's space and identity on her re-entry into the masculine space of the court. One is encouraged to hope that the Duśyanta who goes back with Śakuntalā is a changed man. Further, the play offers a hint, not once but twice, that both Śakuntalā and Duśyanta will find fulfillment not in the space of the court – which would be one of pleasure, not contentment – but in the space of the hermitage to which they would return after

they have fulfilled their worldly duties as husband-and-wife and king-and-queen. In Act IV, Kanva consoles Śakuntalā who is distraught at the thought of leaving the hermitage, by anticipating a later-day return:

When you have long been co-wife with this great Earth

Extending to the far horizons; and borne  
Duhsanta a son, a warrior unrivalled  
who shall bear the yoke of sovereignty,  
then you shall set foot in this Hermitage  
once more with your lord, seeking tranquility. (IV. 23)

This life of tranquility and contentment is anticipated by Duṣyanta too, when he sets foot in the forest surrounding Mārica's hermitage. This life of contemplation amidst nature, he observes, has always been the final stage of life (an obvious reference to the ashrama dharma, which divides the life of men of the upper varṇas into four stages, the final one being one of renunciation and a retreat into the forest) for all descendents of Puru:

As rulers of the earth they wish to pass  
in mansions abounding in sensuous delights  
their early years: thereafter they make  
the roots of trees their home and live  
bound by the hermit's single vow. (VI. 20)

These two hints augur well, for one can visualise a sufficiently sobered Duṣyanta being tutored by Śakuntalā to renounce aggression and the urge to control and, in their place, develop an affective bond with the topos he lives in, so that he may be deserving of it as an oikos too.

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## End Notes

All translations from the play quoted in this paper are by Chandra Rajan. In the case of verses, the citation is by Act and verse number and, in the case of prose passages, by page number. Also, Sanskrit names have been transliterated using standard international conventions, except when the authors quoted have used a different spelling.

## SIGHTING NATURE, CULTURE, AND THE SACRED IN THE OIKOS: A CRITICAL READING OF SELECT TAMIL FOLK SONGS

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### Abstract

*Dominant discourse on family and society often regards nature, culture, and the sacred as discrete entities that have no or minimal bearing on each other. A closer look at the folklore of indigenous cultures suggests something quite different. A study of Tamil agricultural folk songs – one of the important strands in the cultural memory of the Tamil people – attests to the fact that the oikos has a dynamic, often fluid, relation with the nature-culture-sacred triad. This research paper aims to demonstrate how the 'oikonexus' is intricately woven into the fabric of Tamil folk songs. In doing so, it unravels the way an ecocentric view of reality, where nature is mediated through a culture, a culture that is centred on religion, acquires the status of folk wisdom. It showcases the Tamil folk songs, which are thematically variegated and synchronous with the specific periodic requirements of cultivation, occupy the unique space between perspective and practice.*

**Keywords:** Tamil folk songs, oikos, nexus.

Dominant discourse on family and society often regards nature, culture, and the sacred as discrete entities with no or minimal bearing on each other. Such viewpoint as this, that man and manmade institutions are evolutionary improvement on a raw nature, underpins Enlightenment thinking and its contemporary offshoot--technological rationality. Herbert Marcuse in his influential book, *'One-Dimensional Man,'* posits technological rationality as viewing nature as an impassive entity that man can harness with the aid of technology. In other words, "technological rationality fashions everyday life into a 'technological reality'" that reduces "world's objects and nature as an 'a world of instrumentalities'" (Vieta 1). It not only objectifies material reality but also alienates man from himself and his kind and binds him to perpetual bondage; Vieta notes: "By accepting this material abundance we paradoxically submit to endless servitude as workers and consumers that have had our time, experiences, and consciousness captured by advanced industrial society's technocratic means" (3). Such being the case, the sacred finding no place in the bargain is but an understatement.

Contra technological rationality, indigenous cultures view *oikos* as thriving on a nexus between nature, culture, and the sacred. The paper argues that ecocentric living as postulated in Tamil folk songs – one of the repertoires of the cultural memory of Tamil people - promotes a "new civilizational project that was more sensitive to the affirmation of life" envisioned by Marcuse (4). It also buttresses Marcuse's belief that the artistic and cultural

practices of preliterate communities possess subversive capacity (14). The paper also shows that the songs occupy a unique space between perspective and practice, eco-wisdom articulated and performed.

To start with, an etymological parsing of the Greek word *oikos* is apposite here. *Oikos*, for the ecologist Arne Naess, translates to "earth household" (The Ecology No P.). Besides indicating the linkage between household and earth, it signifies that family is but a minimal unit of a larger cosmos, and that the former affects and in turn gets affected by the latter. Equating *oikos* with Tamil concept of *Tinai*, Nirmal Selvamony adds another facet to the term in question: "A typical *oikos* is a nexus in which the sacred, the humans, natural and cultural phenomena stand in an integrated relationship. The Tamil equivalent of *oikos* is *tinai* that integrates specific space and time (*mutal*), naturo-cultural elements (*karu*) and human action (*uri*)."

*Oikonexus* finds articulation in both classic and folk literatures of Tamil. *Thirukkural*, for instance, insists that first charity is that of nature's, and adds that rains would come down for one good man's sake and benefit all. This emphasises the situatedness of man's existence and a dynamic interaction between the constituents of an integrative *oikos*. Selvamony says that the intra-*oikos* interaction amounts to a kind of "complex kinship" and adds: "Duties, obligations and rights bind people, spirits, and nature together quite intricately." That said, the following pages demonstrate how Tamil folks songs

capture the reciprocity between nature, culture, and the sacred in multifarious ways.

Invocation of gods at the outset of any enterprise is a stock feature of folklore; Stith Thompson writes, "In certain preliterate groups and sometimes elsewhere, folk songs are used for magic effects, to defeat enemies, to attract lovers, to invoke the favour of the supernatural powers." In this way, invocatory singing characterises both classic and folk literatures of Tamil. Ilango Adigal, for example, evokes the blessings of the sun, the moon, the rains, and Poombukar (ancient coastal city of Tamil Nadu) at the exordium of his epic *Silappatikaram*. In a similar vein, folk songs contain numerous invocatory instances as can be seen from the following song:

Come Oh! Lord, Sun of Shiva,  
Son Lord! We pray to Thee'  
Lance (vel) is the name given to Thee' ..  
Let rainy days come! ...  
With fair seasons and seasonal rains.  
Raised will be crops in fallow lands;

With daily rains, our village crops will be nourished (Chettiar 122-3).

Seeking divine intervention especially at the times of drought marks yet another dimension of agricultural folk songs. Villagers conduct puja to beseech Lord Narayana to grant them rains. Notably, the word 'Narayana' connotes water (Vanamamalai 55). The following song evinces grief of the rural collective:

I did puja for a day  
Narayana  
Crop-nourishing rain did not come  
Narayana ...  
I did puja for three days  
Narayana  
Pearl of a rain did not come  
Narayana ...  
I did puja for five days  
Narayana  
Aadi rain did not come  
Narayana  
Without Aadi rain  
Narayana  
All the country has become parched  
Narayana (55).

The above song performs two functions, in that, it at once evidences sacral supplication (perspective) and is part of the supplicatory ritual (performative). The invocatory strains also interlace invocation of the sacred with the social reality of the reapers. Vijaya Ramaswamy

writes that such songs "reflect the poverty of landless agricultural labour and the fact that they could barely maintain themselves at the subsistence level" (118). The following song illustrates this aspect:

Looking towards Indra (God of Gods)  
I take the sacred seedling  
Looking towards Chandra (the moon)  
I take the sacred seedling  
The sacred seedlings I plant  
Should grow to heights ...  
Our lord's granaries should be full  
[He feels] if he were to pay in cash  
It would be too weighty  
If he were to pay in paddy  
They [the stalks] would be too long  
If he were to pay in grain  
Its cooking would take time  
So he gives us measures of cooked rice [as payment]  
To such a lord belongs, this farm! (Qtd. In Ramaswamy 118-9).

The song, besides being invocatory, furnishes a template of social critique within which women can voice their dissent and express their discontent over the landlord which might not be possible in normal circumstances. This shows that folk song per se occupies the interstice between nature and culture with its own functional specificities. In the same vein, according to a tradition called 'nadarrppaadal,' farming women intercept the landowner/overseer either by throwing a bunch of seedlings on his path or by encircling him with the same to demand their due (Aiyaswami 121):

Lo, see the elephant comes!  
See how it rocks and comes  
See him our master comes on the elephant  
Waylay the overseer and demand him our wage  
Lo, see the horse comes!  
See how the horse gallops and comes  
Our master comes on the horse  
Jump on the overseer and demand him our wage  
Lo, see the camel comes!  
See how the camel sways and comes  
Our master comes on the camel  
Rattle the overseer and demand him our wage (Ravichandran 76).

Of this tradition R. Aiyaswami writes, "The incident ends with smiles all round. The land owner takes it sportingly. It is a hoary custom and he is used to it. He feels he is its custodian and likes to preserve it at any cost" (121). This subgenre lends a theatrical, ritualistic matrix

where the power relation between working women and the overseer turtles; the powerful and the dependent exchange roles underneath which lies the fact that indeed the overseer's prosperity is determined by women's work. The overseer paying women their due concurs with Tamil culture's insistence on giving others what they deserve. However, certain seed-planting songs depict the harsh reality that exists outside the ritualistic matrix as portrayed by the one above. The following song records how women endure the fatigue of standing all day under the sun – either planting or weeding – and are forced to entreat the supervisor for wages at the end of the day.

Leg aches in the red soil elengidilelo  
 Condescend to look at us o supervisor  
 Elengidilelo  
 Hands and legs are shrunken elengidilelo  
 It's time to drink kanji (gruel)  
 Elengidilelo (Jagannathan 146).

The following excerpt of a seed-planting song pictures the hand-to-mouth existence led by workers on one hand and portrays how women suffer at more than one level – bearing children and bearing the family's economic burden by working in the fields on the other.

Even if she rolls crying and sobbing elengidilelo  
 It is she who has to bear the child  
 Elengidilelo  
 For the wretched fellow's stomach elengidilelo  
 We only need money, master  
 Elengidilelo  
 A worker a thousand seedlings elengidilelo  
 We'll plant them well Elengidilelo (Jagannathan 145).

Besides being infused with social reality and enlaced with potential for social critique, folk songs also transgress strict demarcations between nature, culture, and the sacred as seen from the song below:

Sugarcane seller Mari she's sugarcane seller Mari.  
 Our sugarcane, this is good sugarcane  
 Sugarcane that said Narayana  
 Sugarcane seller Mari she's sugarcane seller Mari  
 Sugarcane that was praised by scholars and poets ...  
 Sugarcane that protected Valli (Krittinasami 221-2).

The above song suggests that an integrative *oikos* places nature and supernature on par with each other. First, sugarcane chanting the name of Narayana reinstates that nature does not exist in a sacral vacuum. Second, the sugarcane earning the praise of poets and scholars implies that the naturo-sacral fusion transpires in a cultural fulcrum. Third, *oikonexus* does not hierarchise its constituents, say, the sacred atop others. For, at times,

even the supernatural relies on the good will of nature as evidenced from sugarcane protecting Valli (consort of Lord Muruga). This indicates that the entities in the *oikos* are complementary, and not supplementary, to each other.

Folk songs are also reminiscent of mythopoeic moments where ecocentric beliefs of the culture inspissated into eco-wisdom. The following song about the myth of the union of Lord Muruga and Valli, for instance, blurs the distinction between nature and the sacred: Seeing hunters, trembled did he Kandhan (another name for Lord Muruga)

Became rosewood tree purposely  
 Shading the sun severally with branches  
 He became eye-blindingly green (Jagannathan 306).

A brief explanation of the extract's context is germane here. Valli is a tribal woman and Muruga, impersonating as an old man, has come to woo her. While he tries to coax her into marrying him, Valli's hunter-brothers appear in the scene. A frightened Muruga, not knowing where to hide, morphs into a rosewood tree. This drama of transmogrification initiates some key implications besides its mythical embedding. First, no sacral mytheme (cultural as well) transpires in a natural vacuum. Second, Lord Muruga's metamorphosis into a rosewood tree problematises pantheism, in that, it puzzles whether nature attains sacrality first or the pantheon naturalises (literally) itself. Third, and most importantly, Tamil culture views nature as not only having intrinsic value but also having integral value, intricately bound with cultural and sacral realms.

Tamil culture also bestows characterological trait to the agricultural land in that the latter functions as an index of the morality upheld by people involved in various aspects of cultivation. People believe, for instance, that if a farmer commits bloodshed, his land would invariably fail him. This shows that personal conduct of an individual has far-ricocheting impact – workers going workless, people foodless, etc. Agriculture as an act that must be unpolluted is illustrated in the belief that prostitutes were not allowed to do farm work as expressed in the following song: If the *dasi* [prostitute] were to plant the seedlings all our dharma will be destroyed (Qtd. in Ramaswamy 118).

The excerpt demonstrates that nature as sacred is coloured by complex ethical mores of the agrarian cultures. Who should and should not plant seedlings reflects that agriculture per se was considered a "sacred task calling for what were then regarded as right attitudes (Ramaswamy 118). In other words, the folk culture constructs sacrality around agriculture to ensure that the



latter's produces are socially acceptable. Moreover, the song echoes a prominent Tamil adage of 'work is God,' which compounds the fact that agriculture is not a value-free Endeavour but a site where different constituents of the *oikos* converge. Besides being laden with ethics, folk songs subtly encapsulate life philosophy of Tamil people. The following song, for example, narrates resurgence and linkage inherent in the biosphere:

Dependent on rain elelo is soil ailasa (elelo and ailasa are rhythmic interjections without any specific meaning)

Dependent on the soil elelo is tree ailasa

Dependent on the tree elelo is branch ailasa

Dependent on the branch elelo is leaf ailasa

Dependent on the leaf elelo is flower ailasa

Dependent on the flower elelo is shoot ailasa

Dependent on the shoot elelo is kaai ailasa (kaai is a stage prior to fruit)

Dependent on the kaai elelo is fruit ailasa

Dependent on the fruit is son ailasa

Dependent on the son elelo are you ailasa

Dependent on you elelo am I ailasa

Dependent on me elelo is Yama ailasa

Dependent on Yama elelo is the graveyard ailasa

Dependent on the grave elelo is grass ailasa (Kalyanasundaram).

The song asserts life even as it reminds the transience of the same on earth, human and otherwise. It reaffirms how elements in the *oikos* are interdependent on each other, redolent of Barry Commoner's catchphrase on ecology: "Everything is connected to everything else" (Butler). It urges human beings to be mindful of their transitoriness as they are not sole proprietors of the biosphere but part of it. It also weaves vestiges of Hindu mythology as it invokes Yama, the patron god of death. Interestingly, the life cycle suggested by the song does not cease with death (Yama) but continues to flow as gleaned from the birth of grass. Moreover, life commences (birth) and resumes (rebirth) in the realm of nature, crisscrossing culture and the sacred in its course.

In conclusion, ecosophy articulated in Tamil agricultural folk songs promotes conscientisation of the interconnectedness of different constituents of the *oikos*. It provides a holistic view of the cosmos that does not devalue any aspect of the *oikos*. In other words, the fluidity of the triad renders it beyond hierarchisation. The paper nevertheless acknowledges the dangers of romanticizing such an indigenous cultural model as this as it involves its own complexities, especially in the realm of social relations. After all, no model can be construed as perfect.

However, what stands out in Tamil folk wisdom is the reciprocal relationship between the constituents; a constant copresencing in each other's boundaries; and most importantly, humanity that is conscious of its bond with the larger *oikos*. The paper, in short, illustrates in various ways the potential for praxis towards eco-sensitivity that the folk songs exhibit.

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## PROBLEMATIZING THE PASTORAL FOR PROACTION: AN ECOCRITICAL READING OF THE FOREST OF ARDEN IN *AS YOU LIKE IT*

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### Abstract

The physical environment has always been an object of interest and study in the mutually exclusive domains of knowledge: Poetry and Science. Widely differing in methodology, both poetry and science have deliberated on humans' need to understand Nature not merely to satisfy their aesthetic and intellectual needs but also to look for interconnections that are vital to the existence of Nature as well as of Humans. So, the study of environment has become a critical field enabling us to understand sustainability, a key word in Ecocritical discourse. Ecocriticism embarks on a project to offer critical explanations for or interpretations of a text, in order to consciously foreground the embedded socio-political texts thereby minimizing the aesthetic quotient of a literary text. Using 'environmental humanities' as a framing field of study, this paper will argue that among the forms of literature drama and its natural and essential corollary theatre have a supreme capacity to subvert worldviews (with their link with ideologies), systems of thought and of literature and their unmistakable resonances. 'Environmental humanities' showcases the existing conjunctions among environmental philosophy, environmental history, ecocriticism, cultural geography, cultural anthropology, and political ecology. Its serious intent is proaction through debate and policy making. With this view in mind this paper will study the pastoral as a problematized convention in *As you like It* using New Historicism as a significant reading strategy. Shakespeare has used this convention (only having positive connotations), the paper will argue, to present the deep environmental problems of his age. He does this by locating Corin in the pastoral landscape of the Forest of Arden. The paper will also argue that greening Shakespeare, which is a process of transforming his aesthetic theatre into an ecotheatre, is a dire critical need to understand Shakespeare's interest in 'proactive theatre' a term that we will never apply to William Shakespeare.

**Keywords:** Ecocriticism, environmental humanities, New Historicism, problematizing the pastoral, proactive theatre.

Ecocriticism is one of the most eclectic of fields as it draws inspiration from almost all the important critical schools and impacts a wide variety of discourses. Though it began as the study of relationship between literature and physical environment, which means physical spaces such as landscapes, waterscapes and wilderness, it has widened its horizon to become an interdisciplinary sphere of influence roping in sociology, politics, economics, anthropology and culture. Lawrence Buell in *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* says that ecocriticism is "the commonest omnibus term for an increasingly heterogeneous movement" (1). Ursula K. Heise also provides a useful starting point for understanding ecocriticism. She says that the field involves a 'triple allegiance' to the scientific study of nature, the scholarly analysis of cultural representations, and the political struggle for more sustainable ways of inhabiting the natural world.' (The Hitchhiker's Guide to Ecocriticism', PMLA 121: 2, 506).

Among the recent schools associated with the eclectic movement of Ecocriticism 'Environmental Humanities' is quite prominent. Environmental Humanities preoccupies itself with the term which has become a concept, 'Anthropocene' (which literally means 'Age of Humans')

which studies "The scale, scope and magnitude of human impacts on the biophysical world" (Noel Castree, 233) and focuses on the transformation of the Earth's surface by detrimental human activities. One of the major concerns of Environmental Humanism is to explode the myth that humanities are "useless" "impractical" or merely a "cerebral pastime" (Noel Castree, 235). Humanities, then, can be "an informed and constructive intervention" in the context of dangerous ideologies and their consequence, harmful actions. Seen in this context one can see such environmental concerns in texts such as *As You like It* by William Shakespeare, though traditional Shakespeare scholarship attempts to universalize him by 'liberating' him from all sources of topicality. Lisa Hopkins says, that the nature of literary theory is such that it allows for new inflections and permutations in ways which do indeed allow you to continue to say new things even about an author as much discussed as Shakespeare. Equally, any theoretical perspective, while it may illuminate one particular aspect of the text, almost automatically entails a blind spot to another aspect. In this sense, any approach can be seen to have both strengths and weaknesses; it is up to you to decide what you consider really important and what you think it is overlook or leave to one side (2)

Ecological advocacy requires the writer to be rooted in the immediate circumstances of his life which comprise the socio-political realities of his time. As *You like It* is usually read as an apolitical text in spite of the presence of the Forest of Arden, associated with the term pastoral. Gabriel Egan in *Green Shakespeare: From Ecopolitics to Ecocriticism* writes, "that our understanding of Shakespeare and our understanding of Green politics have overlapping concerns and can be mutually sustaining (1).

In the realm of literature the word pastoral has always been associated with beneficial impact or consequences. It is created in literature as a topos which serves as an alternative to the world of conflict caused by human imperfections. So many characters move into the pastoral landscape not merely as into an escape zone but as a space which brings about subtle to grand transformations in the minds and consciousness of characters. Among the western writers who used the pastoral landscape as an essential binary to the world of conflict, William Shakespeare is the most important. In Shakespeare, the pastoral prefigures either as a real landscape or as a symbolic one; for example the Forest of Arden is a real landscape in *As You like It* whereas the comic world of Feste in *Twelfth Night* or the Tavern World of Falstaff in *Henry IV Part I* can be seen as symbolic landscapes which represent the pastoral. Many a critic has extolled the virtues of the pastoral landscape suggesting that it is a pristine world of nature, not only unproblematic but also a problem solving space. It is seen as the much needed space and a viable alternative to the trouble-brewing socio-political world. The ideal pastoral world is also seen as a representing the artistic world as opposed to the quotidian workaday world. Among the pastoral landscapes in Shakespeare's play the 'Forest of Arden' has been seen as a very important one.

Critics over the years have commented on the Forest of Arden as an idyllic space that brings about spiritual changes in all those who enter its precincts. But a new historical reading of *As You like It*, which ropes in non-literary writings of Shakespeare's time in order to understand the crucial contemporary concerns with regard to the relationship between humans and nature, presents a different picture of that landscape. Such a reading of the play, quite interestingly, leads readers to a conceptual framework called 'environmental humanities', as mentioned earlier, which was at its nascent stage in the 1970's and became a solid conceptual and critical framework during the 1980's. Noel Castree argues that environmental humanities was launched in order "to

support and further a wide range of conversations on environmental issues in this time of growing awareness of the challenges facing all life on earth" (233). Environmental Humanities is seen as a seismic shift in environmental thought and one of its key features is its aspirational quality, which looks forward to socio-political action through all of the subjects under humanities, though more particularly literature. It expects literature to interrogate and bring down the status quo with regard to human-nature relations. It is in this context that one studies *As You like It*.

In the play Duke Senior, along with a few of his royal colleagues, goes into raptures describing the forestscape because it is both materially and spiritually most beneficial as it gives them food and shelter and a wonderful philosophical attitude. The forest, in the play, can be defined as a 'pastoral space' that represents the opposite of urban life in the play, representing the division between the city and the country that was beginning to emerge in Shakespeare's time. The country was often seen as a place of longing for a simpler time, as shown in Duke Senior's 'forest court' that echoes tales of Robin Hood. The merry court of the forest is an inversion of the court at the beginning of the play which showcases threats of violence and cruel treatment of Duke Frederick. Animesh Roy in his article 'Ecocriticism and Shakespeare: Ecocritical Dialectics in William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*' says, If there is any single trope in Western culture which has shaped the construction of our understanding of nature and environment in a profound way, it is that of the pastoral...It describes a place of perfect peace and happiness; a place without malice, ill will and where human beings live in perfect harmony with nature. The two defining qualities of the pastoral tradition are "the spatial distinction of town (frenetic, corrupt, impersonal) and the country (peaceful, abundant), and the temporal distinction of a past (idyllic) and present ('fallen') (55)

When Duke Senior observes

Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,  
Hath not old custom made this life more sweet  
Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods  
More free from peril than the envious court?  
And this our life exempt from public haunt  
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything (2.1. 1-7)

he presents an idyllic account of the Forest of Arden. The painted pomp and the envy of the court is absent in that landscape. Then he extols the virtues of the physical landscape by saying that Nature educates covertly and unobtrusively as he finds "tongues in trees" which means

that he understands Nature's language and "books in the running brooks" which refers to educative value of the objects of Nature. The expression "sermons in stones" is a brilliant one as it foregrounds the spiritual value of the lessons learnt from Nature.

But William Shakespeare never favoured univocality and/or monolithic conceptual frameworks. He always created sociopolitical subtexts in a text/performance to create conflictual forces of signification making the reader/spectator get diverse modes of perception with regard to the play. In this play he makes Duke Senior and a few of his fellows represent the 'pastoral as idyllic' paradigm, and Jacques, a courtier who is acutely aware of environmental issues and Corin, a rustic character who belongs to the landscape that has been praised as magical (which to him is a sure source of unhappiness) represent an anti-pastoral mindset or stance. By a brilliant juxtaposition of these two sets of characters, William Shakespeare problematizes the pastoral by divesting it of all its positive associations. But what is even more significant is that both Jacques and Corin, in their own terms and a jargon free vocabulary, articulate the concerns of environmental humanities which have come to stay as a radical, proactive environmental thought. Though we cannot claim with any air of certainty that Shakespeare's plays brought about radical changes in the socio-political order of his time, one can definitely argue that the people who came to watch the play were alive to the political resonances that Shakespeare foregrounded overtly as well as covertly. A new historical reading of the play using certain laws concerning the environment will showcase this. Corin's and Jacques' comments and viewpoints will be studied to argue that Shakespeare actually did not create the pastoral as an utopian landscape but as a problematized one which gave rise to disconcerting questions regarding human's relationship with not only pastoral landscapes but also with all the spaces that s/he inhabits. In this we see Shakespeare's eco concerns.

Simon. C. Estok says "doing ecocritical Shakespeare is a difficult business, one very different in many ways from doing ecocriticism with someone such as Thoreau. With Shakespeare, doing ecocriticism is something of a balancing act between valid Shakespearean scholarship on the one hand and real ecological advocacy on the other" (8). This is because in Thoreau's writings ecological concerns were real and those concerns were inextricably connected to Thoreau's personal life. Canonical criticism of Shakespeare had followed Keats' notion of 'negative capability', thereby removing the personal from his creative

works. This leads to the question whether Shakespeare critically responded to the environmental issues of his time. Greg Garrard observes that the historical content in which Shakespeare wrote was neither afflicted by the major environmental problems, nor plagued by doubts about the role of humanity on earth. Though this observation of Greg Garrard will make non-viable an ecocritical reading of Shakespeare's plays, with the research conducted using the new historical mode of analysis, critics have found a host of non-literary references in the play which makes Shakespeare rooted in his zeitgeist. As observed earlier in *As You like It* the major trope is the pastoral and the trope of the pastoral is not a simple and unproblematic alternative. Shakespeare critically looked at the pastoral both as landscape and a literary trope. The play world of *As You like It* portrays economic, social and moral collapse. There is poverty and famine, while brothers are stealing inheritors of brothers. The play seems to mirror a time in the late 1590's when a series of disastrous harvests created a lot of social tension.

Marjorie Garber in *Shakespeare After All* enumerates the characteristics of the pastoral drama to showcase how Shakespeare creatively responded to these features in *As You like It*. She also says that pastoral as a literary trope was in use in literary writings of the Elizabethan period. She states that it "enjoyed a tremendous vogue in Elizabethan England ... [and they] were a favorite with audiences and readers, high and low on the social scale." (394).

In pastoral narratives, city dwellers move away to the countryside, which turns into a "fantasy paradise" where shepherds spend their time composing poems to their sweethearts. But the pastoral besides being a fantasy paradise also has been used as a framing device. It is used to comment on the topical issues of the time, whatever be the time. Marjorie Garber says From its earliest appearance pastoral had been used as a mode of social critique: under the guise of merely talking about shepherds, poets could write critical and satirical accounts of government, politics, and religion (a priest was a "pastor;" his congregation was a "flock" (396)

Garber lists the pastoral features of the pastoral trope in *As You like It* and says "*As You Like It* is not only a pastoral play but also a play about the nature of pastoral, and it begins with one of the most convenient devices of the pastoral tradition, the journey or sojourn..."(395). She also adds

Pastoral in the English Renaissance likewise had its recognizable conventions and associations, as well as its

familiar topoi: shepherds who are also poets, writing poems and playing upon pipes; the good old shepherd, poor but eager to give hospitality to strangers and to those in need; the "savage" man or men who lacked courtly upbringing but possessed an innate gentleness and gentility (Tudor and Elizabethan writers, like Edmund Spenser, spelled the word "salvage," emphasizing its roots in the Latin *silva*, "wood"); the beautiful shepherdess; the pastoral elegy, mourning the death of a shepherd or shepherdess who was often also a poet; the pastoral debate, on topics like nature versus nurture, or country versus city, a leisurely rhetorical break from the action in which shepherds discourse learnedly with one another about these philosophical topics. These conventions of the genre, and others, too, were so well known to Shakespeare's audience (as the conventions of the Western are to modern audiences) that the playwright could use, mock, and tease them with the confident expectation that his point would quickly be understood" (395)

A few pastoral conventions that Shakespeare subverted are:

1. Shepherds are poets and "the most common of all activities of pastoral shepherds in English Renaissance literature was the writing of poetry." Shakespeare plays with this convention by having the love-struck Orlando write love poems that are awful. Orlando is only placed in a pastoral setting and he is not a pastoral character. This looks like a critical comment on the urban appropriation of the pastoral without imbibing the true spirit of the pastoral. The pastoral is not merely a literary convention but an attitude, a mode of living.
2. An old shepherd, although poor, welcomes strangers to the countryside.

Shakespeare very creatively responds to this convention of ordinary hospitality and invests it with a new resonance. Corin is a stock figure—the "kindly and generous old shepherd" who shows up a lot in "pastoral" literature. Despite the fact that Corin is poor and can hardly afford to be hospitable (he does not even have food in his cottage), he offers to shelter Rosalind/Ganymede and Celia/Aliena when they ask him for help (2.4). The conversation between Corin and Rosalind (as Ganymede) and Celia foregrounds the pathetic plight of the people who are the original inhabitants of the forestscape. A conventionalized figure Corin is used by William Shakespeare to be a socio-political commentator, who details the tragic

history of urban exploitation. He showcases the shallow ecological disposition of his master, who exploits people without any scruple and moral compunction. Rosemary Sgroi says in her article "Elizabethan Social and Economic Legislation"

The regulation of land use before and after the Tillage Act of 1563 was intended to prevent the conversion of arable to pasture, and any resulting 'depopulation' or displacement of rural labour. For much of the sixteenth century enclosures were the target of occasional uprisings and hostility, particularly at times of dearth, and agrarian legislation reflected an attempt to resist the rise of new types of 'convertible' husbandry favoured by enclosing landlords who could make greater profits from grazing sheep and growing an ever increasing variety of cash crops. (<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/periods/tudors/elizabethan-social-and-economic-legislation>)

So it is clear that Shakespeare was responding to the environmental crisis through the Corin story in *As you like It* as his means to deal with the disturbing circumstances in the lives of people associated with rural landscape. The legislation and Corin's story inform and interrogate each other to bring forth worthwhile counterhistories that have huge ecological implications. So Corin's story opens up a new history in the sunny comedy of *As You like It* to foreground the fact that play is not only an ideal social comedy, but also that which embeds disturbing accounts of history which study the nexus between power and profit and show how the poor folk get marginalized. In this regard Randall Martin observes

The 1597 act permitting convertible husbandry coincided with even more embattled practice of enclosure, in which common fields were bounded by hedgerows of fences and turned into more profitable private farms. Enclosure was traditionally associated with the conversion of open grazing land into sheep pasture. Because wool was more profitable than corn up to the first half of the sixteenth century, this kind of enclosure gave landlords an opportunity to reverse falling incomes caused by inflation eating away at fixed rents (67).

Dispossession of land is one of the major crises in environmental discourse. The poor peasants have always been victims of such marginalization. *As you like It* showcases the plight of such people and based on all these pieces of information it is very clear that Shakespeare was making a subversive statement about capitalism as he understood it and its ecological implications.

3. There is an elegy—a poetic lament for a dead person in every pastoral Shakespeare uses this convention to present a brilliant commentary on the idealized version of the pastoral in the play. He makes Jacques lament over the dead body of a deer. The bemoaning of Jacques in the play regarding the death of a deer is a 'play' with convention though with serious overtones: Though Jacques is nearly dismissed as a man of melancholy disposition hence cynical, Duke Senior suggests that he ought to be taken seriously: Show me the place:

I love to cope him in these sullen fits,  
For then he's full of matter. (2.2.66-69)

Quite interestingly Jacques' elegy on the dead deer, a unique use of the pastoral convention, becomes a biting criticism on human exploitation of nature. When he says "Sweep on, you fat and greasy citizens;/ 'Tis just the fashion: wherefore do you look/ Upon that poor and broken bankrupt there?" (2.1. 58-60) he sees the killing of the deer not as a single act to deal with but as an instance of large scale exploitation by "fat and greasy citizens". He indulges in a fierce invective against the people of the court who treat humans and animals with enormous disrespect and disdain. He, according to the Lord, calls the people from the cityscape as "mere usurpers, tyrants and what's worse, / To fright the animals and to kill them up/ In their assign'd and native dwelling-place" (2.1.60-62). Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin in *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals, Environment* say

Human individuals and cultures at various times have been and treated 'like animals' by dominant groups, and both human genocide and human slavery have been and in some cases continue to be, predicated on the categorization of other peoples as animals. (135).

Shakespeare suggests through Jacques that the species boundary is indeed a gross fiction. Jacques is very important to the play because he has an incomparable eco-awareness which looks at all forms of exploitation as one.

Jacques as a melancholic philosopher may not locate himself in the pastoral setting and paradigm. He can fit in only with regard to a sad appraisal of life of a pastoral character who moans the death of a loved one. Jacques' saving grace is his sensitivity. One does not see a mere cerebralism in Jacques. Ecocriticism, which is averse to cerebralism, exhorts human beings to transform knowledge into wisdom and bring grand intellectual visions into one's experiential framework. Jacques' grief regarding exploitation is at once deep and sincere. He is not just a

votary of pastoral life as this will lead him to an idealizing impulse with regard to the life of the countryside; Jacques can see drawbacks in any system of thought or mode of living if the foundation of these is based on false premises. He, then, will assume the role of an ecocritical, choric commentator when he attacks wrong attitudes and their consequence, exploitative actions. Achieving a beautiful bond between mind and heart, Jacques both appreciates life and depreciates false perceptions of Man. His target of attack is an ignorant point of view which comprises an intolerable binarism. Commenting on the presence of Jacques in the play Kelly Dagan in her article "Sweet Adversity: Jacques in *As You Like It*" says By consistently disrupting the festival atmosphere, Jacques reminds the audience what remains at stake behind the rustic games, raising issues of exile, self-awareness, and community. Without Jacques, the audience would be left with an appealing but fairly inconsequential play; his dogged melancholy counterbalances the merry feasting and playacting, while also recalling the wider world outside the country dances (<https://www.smith.edu/english/SweetAdversity.php>).

Hence one can study Jacques with reference to a typical pastoral character Corin, though with a difference. Corin is the exploited one by his churlish master though he does not allow this to interfere with his inborn qualities of love, care and hospitality; whereas Jacques is a voice against exploitation being a part of the group that exploits. His decision to stay back in the Forest of Arden when all the courtiers return to their dukedom is a conscious choice to stay in a space which will involve minimal exploitation.

So one can argue that there is a metastructure in *As You like It* as Shakespeare creates an art world through the Forest of Arden which transports people to realms of joy and transform human consciousness to perceive unity; but when the contemporary concerns loom large the play critiques the pastoral to foreground the problems of people who are dependent on the forestscape. Albert Cirillo in "*As You Like It: Pastoralism Gone Awry*" observes that by consistently undercutting the pastoral convention as a convention, he also suggests that the ideal of the pastoral is not an end in itself—which would be unattainable in any case—but the underlying substance of the real, the world of the possible which should inform the actual (19)

This observation tells us how an ecocritical reading of a text like *As You like It* can be at once intellectually stimulating and appropriately proactive. The ideal must not only inform the real but also make the ideal practicable.

If this is done the environmental crises of our times may be countered and beyonded.

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## RESTORATION OF THE LOST EARTH-CENTRED CULTURE IN THE NOVEL *THINGS FALL APART* BY CHINUA ACHEBE

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### Abstract

Nature is considered as an integral part of African culture. In the novel *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe introduces the Igbo tribes of Nigeria who lived with respect, fear and admiration towards the natural world. They also considered themselves a part of their environment and the whole ecological system. The author depicts the Igbo clan to have had a complex culture and tradition and a very strong relationship with nature. He presents this novel in such a way, that the readers could clearly see the culture of Umofia before and after the colonization. This comparison helps the readers to understand the rich culture of the Igbo tribes and their symbiotic bond with nature. The eco-friendly attitude of the tribal clan makes their culture distinct from the culture of the colonizers and so-called developed cultures. Achebe has attempted to highlight this feature to revive the original African culture which was often misunderstood or never found. The aim of this research paper is to reveal the attempt of Achebe by highlighting the eco-critical aspects such as "dwelling", "interconnectedness", "eco-spirituality", "Oneness", etc., found in various events and characters of the novel.

**Keywords:** Ecology, Ecocriticism, Dwelling, Interconnectedness, Eco-Spirituality, Oneness.

*Things Fall Apart* stands as a response or a write-back to the misinterpretations of the Igbo people and their culture. In the essay "The Biafran Cause", Achebe quotes Dr. Emmanuel Obiechina who had declared that the purpose of African writers are "to correct the distortion of West African culture, and to recreate the past in the present in order to educate the African reader and give him the confidence in his cultural heritage" (Achebe, Morning 117). Achebe has presented a pre-colonial land where people lived in complex, diverse and fruitful relationship with the African environment which was disturbed by the colonization. Achebe has exhibited African's bond with the land in order to make the readers aware of their ancient culture in which their forefathers lived in harmony with the natural world before things started to fall apart as the consequence of the foreign invasion. The purpose of this paper is to attempt a study of *Things Fall Apart* from an ecocritical perspective and to show that Achebe has written the novel to highlight the rich and eco-friendly nature and culture of the Igbo tribes and its depletion due to the colonization.

Ecocriticism is a term coined in the late 1970's by combining "criticism" with a short form of "Ecology" i.e. "Eco"- the science that investigates the interrelationship of all forms of plant and animal life with each other and with their physical habits. Some of its alternative terms are environmental criticism and green studies. "Ecocriticism designates the critical writings which explore the relation

between literature and the biological and physical environment conducted with an acute awareness of the damage being wrought on the environment by human activities" (Abrams, Groffrey 96). This concept has facets that make it seem like a new vision of "pastoral" or an update of "wilderness studies"- signifies nature in a state uncontaminated by civilization (Garra 59).

The book opens with a warm atmosphere that exhibits the essential qualities of a primordial image of a primitive society which is bound by laws of nature, good and evil, beliefs and superstitions, myths and legends, rites and religion, customs, folk speech, proverbs, songs, anecdotes, etc. it is not only the story of Okonkwo, a head strong and proud man, but also the story of the African community of Umofia which existed on a strong bond with nature. It is interesting that Okonkwo's father Unoka, who was considered to be an unsuccessful person among the Igbo clan, seems to be a nature lover and lives in perfect harmony with nature, while Okonkwo himself had a troubled relationship with it. Unoka's love for nature is explicit in certain parts of the novel. "He loved this season of the year, when the rain had stopped and the sun rose every morning with dazzling beauty" (Achebe 4). He admires and respects nature as "he loved the first kite that returned with the dry season... kites sailing leisurely against the blue sky" (Achebe 5) and "Unoka was never happy when it came to wars" (Achebe 6). From this character it is clear that even an unsuccessful person of

Igbo community was in harmony with nature and caused no trouble.

"Dwelling" is another important aspect proposed by Greg Garrad in his book 'Ecocriticism'. It is something that "implies the long term imbrications of humans in a landscape of ancestry, and death, of ritual, life and work" (Garred 108). According to Garred, in building dwellings, a community roots itself in the physical world, and that world becomes the fixed center of memory and desire. "...till the world becomes the locus of memory and desire, till the land takes on a "figural" as well as "literal" value (Garred 115). This is to say that the members of most indigenous communities have lived in harmony with nature with "considerable knowledge and skill but always within the terms of their own cultural cosmos" (Garred 135) until they were disturbed by the colonizers.

The villagers had well understood the natural world with which they coexisted. They were also aware of the darker aspects of nature, but they have learned to balance the dark nights by enjoying the moonlit ones, knowing what to avoid and what to take pleasure in. Their oneness with nature helped them understand the environment better and act accordingly since agriculture was their chief occupation.

"African soil is deplorably poor and much cannot still be done to improve it. The result is that farming which was the only means of getting subsistence crop was subject to shifting cultivation. Besides, drought, swollen rivers, heavy rains made the fate of masses grim and they felt defeated" (Dhawan 44)

Hence farming is of great importance in Africa. To be a farmer is to be bold and successful man in Africa. The pride of Okonkwo derives from nothing but the success in growing yams. Yam stands for masculinity of which he is a symbol. "Yam stood for masculinity, and he who could feed his family on yam from one harvest to another was a very great man indeed" (Achebe 31), Okonkwo's character, position and personality are partly due to the external force of nature. As an agricultural society, the survival of the Umuofian people depends on the earth and its predictable cycle of seasons. Their treatment of nature exhibits their eco-spiritual attitude which in return indicates the deep complex culture of the tribes. Thus, readers can observe frequent worship of the earth and her bounty through their constant holy rituals to the "earth goddesses An" (Achebe 29) especially at the New Year and the harvest season.

The Igbo's also reap the earth's wealth in rather economical but effective ways. Trapping trees for palm-wine, capitalizing off of locust plagues, and making

medicine with herbs were common. There existed a deep sense of oneness in their symbiotic relationship with nature. Unoka's death is indicative of the balance and good sense the community has achieved in rooting itself in the land, for when he is affected by swelling in his body parts, he is isolated in the 'evil forest' the people of the village for it may be any contagious disease. They did not bury him as they considered cultivable land to be sacred, "source of all fertility" (Achebe 35). This also emphasizes the mysterious healing nature of the wild forests.

Reference to nature is found all over the novel in the form of metaphors, similes or little proverbs or sayings. Some of the examples are, "Okonkwo's fame had grown like a bush-fire in the harmattan" (Achebe 3), "he drank palm wine from morning till night and his eyes were red and fierce like the eyes of a rat when it was caught by the tail and dashed against the floor" (Achebe 44), "Okonkwo felt as if he had been cast out of his clan like a fish onto a dry sandy beach, panting" (Achebe 92), "the earth burned like hot coals" (Achebe 17), etc. This shows that the African people lived in a symbiotic nature with their environment as their proverbs and examples have intertwined strong reference to nature. This is also seen in the folklore present in this novel.

Nature plays an integral part and often provides incidence and characters for their moral tales. The metaphorical tortoise story which is narrated by Ekwefi to Ezinma explains the dangers of greediness. It clearly throws light on the attitude of African culture which is well aware of its position in the ecology. It points of their intelligence as they decoded the formula for successful, symbiotic coexistence with nature for peaceful living. They also have song on nature, "The rain is falling, the sun is shining, Alone Nnadi is cooking and eating" (Achebe 34). This explains their mundane life which is fused with nature. It portrays their joy of their coexistence with the natural world.

The coming of white man on an "iron horse" (Achebe 130), destruction of the royal python, killing of the ancestral spirits in the second part of the novel, stands as the symptom of the things slowly falling apart as the result of the problems caused by the strangers (i.e.) colonizers. The gradual impact of the colonizers found in the African environment had lead to a drastic change is expressed by Achebe in the following passage:

"It was the time of the full moon. But that night the voice of children was not heard. The village *ilo* where they always gather for a full moon play was empty... Umuofia was like a startled animal with ears erect, sniffing the

silent, ominous air and not knowing which way to run” (Achebe 186)

The sense of oneness with nature and the sense of dwelling of an environment where one feels at home are gone. The harmony and balance that sustained the community has disappeared and the traumatized villagers have lost their sense of place and consequently have no sense of direction anymore. The destruction done to the clan is explained with the description of its surroundings. This justifies the mirror effect which nature shared with the culture and people of Umuofia.

Thus, an attempt on ecocritical reading of *Things Fall Apart* shows how Achebe wrote it from what would now be called an ecological consciousness to suggest Africans to know their rich and complex culture which valued the land that they dwelled in. The eco-friendly attitude of the tribal clan makes their culture distinct from the culture of the colonizers and so-called developed cultures. Achebe hopes to revive the original African culture which was often misunderstood or never found through this approach. It glorifies the intelligence of the ancestors of the African culture who well understood their symbiotic coexistence with nature which is the key element for successful living.

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## ANTHROPOMORPHISM IN GIRISH KARNAD'S *NAGAMANDALA*

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### Abstract

*Girish Karnad's Nagamandala revolves around the anthropocentric conceptualization of nature. By delving into this concept of anthropomorphism, the paper argues that aspects of human beings and their culture emerge from their relationship with the ecological world. It highlights patriarchal undertones to draw parallels between the perceptions of nature and the atrocities faced by women in the play. It recognises the need for ecocritical and ecofeminist readings of significant Indian texts in today's world of environmental catastrophes and appalling state of women.*

**Keywords:** Anthropomorphism, Ecofeminism, Nagamandala, Girish Karnad

Girish Karnad's *Nagamandala* is a play that has been worked on numerous times as his works are known to give an honest insight into the Indian society, presenting its problems as they are. One such problem that is extensively worked on by Dr. Rushiraj Waghela is the situation of women in her work *Girish Karnad's Naga-Mandala: A Note on Women Emancipation and Empowerment*. Scholar Jyoti Dahiya too looks at aspects of societies like marriage and love in her work *Naga-Mandala: A Story of Marriage and Love*.

Karnad being an eloquent playwright, *Nagamandala* has also been worked at in terms of folktale and myth structures by Dolores Collellmir in his work *Mythical structures in Girish Karnad's Nagamandala*. Thematic analysis of the play has also been attempted by Dr. V. Madhavi in her work *Naga-Mandala: A Thematic Study*. This paper as worked on by Waghela too looks at the problems faced by women but extends onto yet another significant issue: the exploitation of nature, and locates it in terms of common tropes in myths. By focusing on one of the most common process of mankind: anthropomorphism, it recognises patriarchy as the root problem to both.

Ecocritics argue that "man's tragic flaw is his anthropocentric vision and his compulsion to conquer, humanize, domesticate, violate, and exploit every natural thing" (Rueckert, 113). Anthropomorphism is this process which gives primacy to humans who "either sentimentalize or dominate the environment" (Martin, 217-218). Ecocriticism as a movement rejects such anthropocentric approaches to literary studies and propagates a biocentric one which "decenters humanity's importance and explores the complex interrelationships between the human and the nonhuman" (Martin, 218). Ecofeminism on the other hand goes one step ahead and recognises connections between

the commodification of nature and the exploitation of women, identifying both as having stemmed from patriarchy.

It is this harrowing state of both nature and women in the Indian society which is often reflected in its literature, such as in Girish Karnad's *Nagamandala* (1988). Divided into a prologue and two acts, it is about an elaborate ritual of serpent worship. The term 'nagamandala' comprising of two words: 'naga' and 'mandala' stands for the divine union of male and female snakes. Karnad's play revolves around this union of a snake, however not with another snake, but instead with a woman. It is this feature of the play which makes it an interesting choice for an ecocritical and ecofeminist reading.

The play opens with the Flames that gather in the temple to exchange gossip about the households they inhabit. They have been given the ability to speak and have a 'female voice'. They are joined by the Story of Rani and the Song who take the form of a woman and sari respectively. This anthropomorphism although plays to the common stereotype of woman gossiping; can be said to be an attempt to bring out the evils of the Indian patriarchal society by giving both nature and women a voice. This is also seen in the instances of Rani when severely mistreated by Appanna, turns to her anthropomorphised imaginary friends: the Whale, the Eagle and the Stag.

RANI:... So the demon locks her up in his castle. Then it rains for seven days and seven nights. It pours. The sea floods the city. The waters break down the door of the castle. Then a big whale comes to Rani and says: 'Come, Rani, let us go...' (Karnad, 14-15)

RANI: Listen-please (she does not know what is happening, stands perplexed. She cannot even weep. She goes and sits in a corner of her room. Talks to herself

indistinctively)...So Rani asks him: 'Where are you taking me?'.....Then please take me to them- immediately. Here I come.' So the eagle carries her across the seven seas... (Karnad, 6-7)

These anthropomorphised figments of Rani's imagination points out to the readers her life as a victim to child marriage, locked in a house, physically abused and alone, while her husband engages in adultery. Such horrific state of women has become a common sight for years, almost established as a way of life. It is in this context that name 'Appanna' which means 'any man' and 'Rani' meaning 'queen' becomes interesting. While 'Appanna' points to the metaphor of man in general, his chauvinistic stance and towering dominance, the later is a satire on this immoral treatment of many women like Rani under the same Indian patriarchal society.

This patriarchal abuse does not only restrict to women but also extends onto nature. This can be seen in the parallel that emerges between Naga and Rani. Nature over the years has been considered as creators of human beings for it sustains human needs. Snakes in Indian mythology especially have always been attributed with the powers of creation and fertility owing to its casting of skin and being symbolically reborn. In the play Naga reflects this trope too for it provides Rani with a new life. As Rani performs the snake ordeal as instructed by Naga, the Cobra does not bite her but instead sliding up her shoulder it spreads its hood like an umbrella over her head. The society immediately divinizes her and expresses guilt for putting her through the ordeal. Appanna too fondly takes her into his arms. Naga thus becomes the creator of Rani's new life.

This notion attached to nature is much similar to that of women who too are thought of as creators as they possess the gift of giving birth. Both snakes and women as such have been worshipped as deities and put on a pedestal in the Indian society. This attribution of divinity to nature stems from the idea of nature as pure, fair and honest. This is reflected when the King Cobra is considered as a higher being capable of determining Rani's chastity. This notion also reiterated when Naga on wanting to help Rani describes to her how she must only tell the truth for it is how it has "always been":

RANI: And suppose what I think is the truth turns out to be false?

NAGA: I'm afraid it will have to bite you. What you think is not of any consequence. It must be the truth. (Anguished) I can't help it, Rani. That's how it has always been. That's how it will always be. (Karnad, 34-35)

This purity that is taken for granted with nature however has to be constantly reiterated when it comes to women who have to prove their chastity whenever the patriarchal society demands. ELDER II: It brings no credit to the village to have a husband publicly question his wife's chastity. But Appanna here says: Since the day of our wedding, I have not touched my wife or slept beside her side. And yet she is pregnant. He has registered the complaint, so we must judge its merits (Karnad, 36). The Elders gave Rani the option of either holding a red-hot iron or putting her hand in boiling oil. Failure to do so meant her being guilty and subject to punishment. This loss-loss situation we find Rani at is characteristic of the Indian society again. While Rani like Sita in the *Ramayan* was divinised only having proved her chastity, Naga (nature) although divinised, was almost killed by Appanna despite being previously seen as a divinised entity. The play thus brings out this dual treatment of both under the shackles of patriarchy.

In the play the attribution of mysticism to nature is also seen in yet another incident: the magical roots that Kurudavva gives Rani. "Grind it into a nice paste and feed it to your husband. And watch the results. Once he smells you, he won't go sniffing after that bitch. He will make you a wife instantly" (Karnad, 13). Through the roots that have magical powers, Karnad sticks to typical folklore trope where nature is associated with mysticism for several reasons; in this case, to correct the wrongs of a man and give Rani a better life. The play thereby adheres to another trope, Nature as a saviour which is common in Indian myths as seen in the case of the anthropomorphised Hanuman who saves Sita in the *Ramayan*. This notion becomes clear in the climax of the play when Naga comes to Rani's aid when her chastity was contested. The Whale, the Stag and the Eagle mentioned earlier also play the role of saviours in Rani's figments. This perception reiterates again when the anthropomorphised Flames and the Story save the life of the playwright in the play who was destined to die if he could not stay awake through the night.

Karnad however deviates from the conventional trope of men as heroes. When questions for the need for a male saviour for Rani arises, it is put to rest by the balance that is created at the end when Naga is saved by Rani, and the playwright too at the hands of his female anthropomorphised companions at the temple. By employing nature as saviours, the play can be said to be an attempt to bring out how nature has never been considered as an entity in itself, but instead thought to have anthropocentric existence. This is vividly reflected

through the roles of the mongoose and the dog in the play. APPANNA: What's wrong with the dog? Why is it asleep in the hot sun? (Whistles. Then comes nearer and inspects) It is dead! Dead! I paid fifty rupees for it! (Karnad, 29) Women too as in the case of Rani, over the centuries have always been looked at as a daughter, a wife and a mother with never a genuine interest in her independent existence. The play however has a much more ecofeminist stance by having Rani capable of taking matters into her own hands. When Rani comes to know of the reality that who she was making love to as a husband was not actually Appanna, but the Cobra in disguise; she continues the relation with the Cobra. "Get into my hair. Are you safely in there? Good. Now stay there. And lie still. You don't know how heavy you are. Let me get used to you, will you?" (Karnad, 45). Also with the employing of nature as saviours, it sees nature as an entity too.

These parallels between the women and nature can be understood through a Cultural ecofeminist lens that believes in a unique relationship between women and nature. It believes that women share a more intimate relationship with nature owing to their gender role (family nurturer) and their biology (pregnancy, lactation, etc). It is "such associations that allow women to be more sensitive to the sanctity and degradation of the environment." The parallels can also be looked at in terms of the discourse of language in the play that privileges men. In the case of women language propagates the divide between the existing binary of male and female and their expected behaviours by the society. In the play although Appanna openly engages in adultery, he is never made to undergo an ordeal while Rani when suspected is deemed a "whore" and "slut". APPANNA: Aren't you ashamed to admit it, you harlot? I locked you in, and yet you managed to find a lover! Tell me who it is. Who did you go to with your sari off? (Karnad, 33). In the case of nature, the linguistic binary is created in terms of the nature and culture divide that emerges where humans are relegated as apart from nature.

KURUDAVVA: (To Kappana) He keeps his wife locked up like a caged bird? I must talk to her. Let me down-instantly! (Karnad, 10)

KAPPANNA: That Appanna should have been born a wild beast or a reptile. By mistake, he got a human birth. (Karnad, 8)

Kurudavva having compared Rani to a "caged bird" in a way puts forth the idea of while it is okay to cage nature; it is immoral to do so to a human. This notion is not uncommon and falls back to the 'Speciesist' belief that

humans are superior beings, separate from nature. Ecocritics rejects such anthropocentric linguistic and social construction of nature and fights for nature to be seen as an entity in itself for as Kate Soper puts it, "It isn't language which has a hole in its ozone layer" (What is nature?, 151).

The second example on the other hand reflects perfectly Jim Mason's coined word 'misothery'. His theory explains the hostile attitude towards animals, or those assumed to display the features that are thought to be characteristically "animal". "We describe horrible human beings as 'animals,' 'beasts' or 'brutes' when we want to describe their egoism, insatiable greed, insatiable sexuality, cruelty, senseless slaughter of nonhuman beings, and the mass slaughter of human beings" (Mason, 163).

This idea becomes highly interesting when applied to the anthropomorphised male Naga. Naga in the play mostly is seen to be kind and giving while men (village Elders and Appanna) engage in atrocious activities. However this becomes questionable towards the end of the play when he is seen contemplating adhering to the toxic patriarchal behaviour: the need to possess or control women. NAGA: Rani! My queen! The fragrance of my nights! The blossom of my dreams! In another man's arms? In another man's bed? Does she curl around him as passionately every night now?....No I can't bear this. Someone must die. Why shouldn't I kill her? If I bury my teeth into her breasts now, she will be mine- mine forever (Karnad, 42). The play thus plagues the mind of readers with the question of 'bestiality'. It makes readers ponder if it was the anthropomorphism of Naga into a 'male' that explains this 'bestial' behaviour towards the end. The play thus through anthropomorphism redefines what is actually 'bestial' and mocks the patriarchal practice of men controlling nature, and also the body and sexuality of women.

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## TAGORE'S *MUKTA-DHARA*: AN INDIAN ECO-DRAMA

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### Abstract

*The study is an attempt to analyse Rabindranath Tagore's play titled Mukta-dhara or The Waterfall, by viewing it through the green lens and proving that it can be rightly categorized as an eco-drama. The play succeeds in bringing nature to the foreground, by making its degradation the thematic concern. The play is about the 'eco-hubris' of the people of an imaginary land Uttarakut and their king Ranajit who attempts to gain control over the river Mukta-dhara through the construction of a dam (a diabolic machine, which ushers in the 'Machine-Civilization') in order to use it in gaining political advantage over Shiv-tarai, a place under the grip of severe drought. The play brings out the anthropocentric attitude which leads to the neglect of short term and long term impacts of such a dam on other aspects of nature. This 'eco-hubris' of the King and the royal scientist Bibhuti is countered by the 'eco-spirituality' of characters like Visvajit, Dhananjaya, Sanjaya and most importantly Prince Abhijit who pays reverence to the smallest aspect of nature. Guided by an inner call to perform his 'eco-dharma', he takes up the duty of protecting the land and the river from such an atrocity and gives up his life heroically as he releases the river from its temporary confinement. Thus Tagore puts an event of environmental conflict and ecological injustice at the centre of the play, questions master narratives of development that sanction human exploitation of nature and sends across deep ecological and eco-spiritual messages, making the play an eco-drama.*

**Keywords:** Tagore, Eco-drama, Eco-hubris, Eco-dharma, Eco-spirituality and Eco-justice

### Tagore's *Mukta-dhara*: An Indian Eco-drama

*Mukta-dhara* (1922) is one of the finest of Rabindranath Tagore's dramatic works, often described as his "nationalist critique of colonial exploitation" (Reddy 129). It is the story of how the powerful ruler of the imaginary country Uttarakut, along with his chief scientist, try to dam the river 'Mukta-dhara' in order to gain control over a subordinate country Shiv-tarai and the crown prince destroys the dam to prevent such an atrocity from being committed on the people and the land. Though the political, humanistic and spiritual messages in the text are of relevance, at one point or the other the ecological significance of the tale over shadows every other probable interpretations. The play becomes a prophetic rendering of India's post-independence, technology driven future- which in Tagore's own words is a 'Machine Civilization'. According to him, Machine Civilization is a form which modernism, "...takes under capitalism- a form which continuously turns human civilization into an all grabbing, all consuming and all destroying machine" (Reddy 129). Downing Cless calls this tendency of humanity as 'eco-hubris', which according to him is "... an excessive zeal to control or dominate nature, acting without limits and with a sense of being above nature as though one were a god" ("Ecodirecting Canonical Plays" 160). The eco-dharmic crusade against this infamous partnership between man and machine, which results in ruthless environmental exploitation (where nature and even the 'othered'

categories of powerless human beings are cruelly victimized), becomes the crux of the play-making it an Indian eco-drama

*Mukta-dhara* literally means a free flowing river. The damming of this river, clearly an anthropocentric endeavor by Uttarakut, reflects man's desire to gain control over nature. Here the play raises a very valuable question, 'Are development projects like dam construction, "...environmentally sustainable and socially justifiable?" (Issac 95). The play exposes Tagore's, "... deep distrust of all government by machinery and of all prostitution of science to serve violence and oppression..." (7). Often science (using the meta narrative of development) becomes the tool of the 'civilized and cultured' man to tame nature and they use it as a weapon in the games of power politics played over the powerless 'other' (which includes the other nonhuman forms of nature too). Scientific knowledge adds fuel to humanity's eco-hubris. Bibhuti the royal scientist voices this as he says, "The purpose of my dam was that human intelligence should win through to its goal, though sand and stone and water all conspired to block its path. I had no time to think of whether some farmers paltry maize crop would die...My thoughts are full of the splendour of the power of the machine" (12). Hence science, instead of being a voice of reason, ends up as a tool for exploitation of nature and its resources with no consideration for other living and nonliving aspects. The play here also addresses how



political and economic forces work behind ecological deprivation. With the sole aim of gaining political advantage over a country by causing economic depravity, Uttarakut first blocks Shiv- tarai's mountain pass, which is a clear violation of land ethics. Now a dam is constructed without thinking of its ecological viability and the resultant ill effects on the environmental health of the river and the natural functioning of many ecosystems. *Mukta-dhara* in a way predicts the controversial Sardar Sarovar Project on river Narmada which similarly, "brings up a complex terrain of multifaceted social, political, ecological and ethical issues" (Issac 101). The play is a forewarning that we are headed towards, "one dominant global culture, an ever expansionist and predatory industrial capitalism, valuing profit above life...[This global culture] reduces the entire natural world...into resources to be ordered and controlled, used and exploited in the pursuit of material growth and economic development..." (Guhyapati).

The dam is a symbol of menace and its diabolic nature echoes in the words of even the people of Uttarakut as it is constantly referred to as "a fearsome sight", "demons head", "grinning skeleton head", "a blasphemy" (10) etc. In fact the king aims at using it as a very powerful ecological weapon. Tagore calls it the "thirst spear" (20), which is dispatched with the aim of completely destabilizing the enemy. Tagore's thirst spear becomes much more meaningful at present. Fresh and safe drinking water is increasingly becoming a major concern for the world, owing to many reasons like pollution, climate changes etc. The message here is to stop fighting over such valuable resources and instead find means for, "Participatory management of natural goods, especially water [which] demands a holistic approach that integrates social and economic development that is both equitable and sustainable, and includes protection of natural ecosystems" (Issac 52).

Further, the play foregrounds the inter relationship between nature, spirituality, religion, science and man. Maintaining an egalitarian relationship with nature is at the core of almost all religions, across the Indian subcontinent. Machine Civilization, about which Tagore expresses his concern, inaugurates the ever growing conflict between religion and science. This conflict has also led to humanity's alienation from nature.

...the deepest root of the modern ecological crisis may be found in the unique cosmology... [which may be described] with its related paradigms of spirituality, philosophy, science, and technology, as 'mechanistic', meaning that it placed the image of machine at the heart of its

cosmological imagination...cutting itself off culturally from spiritual nourishment by the Divine Energy sacramentally disclosed in and through the Earth and the Wider Cosmos. (Ferrero 20)

The boons of nature which were till then viewed with reverence and piety, owing to the spiritual significance bestowed on them by religion, now in this new 'mechanistic cosmology' became mere material resources left at humanity's disposal. Mythical tales and sacred narratives associated with gods and goddesses are often linked to nonhuman elements of nature, which receive the same reverence the gods are given. The rivers of India like Ganga thus enjoy a holy status. But with the setting in of the machine civilization even the holy river which is believed to purge one off the sins of many births, now battle pollution and despoliation helplessly.

Using their intellect, hard work and resultant technological advancements humanity strives to master and enslave the forces of nature. In a way the anthropocentric attitude behind scientific developments thus can be linked to a corresponding spiritual degradation. When Tagore narrates a story of a country's twenty five years old attempt to stop the free flowing river using a fearsome machine, we are exposed to the starting point of a decay which is eating up our entire humanity.

In the play, "...the Machine is seen, sinister against the sunset, crouching over the land and its life, overtopping even God's Temple..." (7). According to the royal scientist Bibhuti the machine has the power to become the new god, as he says, "The gods? - in the strength of my Machine I can take over their divine office myself..." (13).

The people of Uttarakut sing praise to this new sinister source of power, parodying the chants of Bhairava's pilgrim devotees.

Thy power melts the stubborn ore,  
Shatters the old rock's living core  
Breaks down the stable things of yore.  
All hail, all hail, machine  
A vulture thou, whose talons tear  
The bowels of earth, and lay them bare,  
Machine, O lord Machine. (16)

Tagore thus places the demonic machine in opposition to Lord Bhairava, a form of Shiva who is believed to be the guard and protector of the Universe, closely associated with the *pancha bhutas*. In Hindu mythology Bhairava is a fierce god, the destroyer of ego, as seen in the story of his beheading of the divine creator, Brahma. The anthropocentric attitude and eco-hubris of Bibhuti incidentally the 'creator' of the dam, reflects an

ego, similar to the one the mythological story says was once possessed by Brahma. Thus the songs sung by the pilgrim devotees take a new ecological meaning. Removal of humanity's egotistic preoccupation with self is necessary for developing a bio-centric worldview. By bringing to focus the God Shiva or Bhairava, Tagore gives a very simple message about the organic world view of Hinduism, the need to cultivate a, "...self-realization and an expansive view of the self which goes beyond the ego to embrace the environment and the 'other'" (Swarnalatha 114). Thus the play successfully imparts a deep ecological message which seems to have become dim in the modern mechanistic cosmology, where machine is the ultimate reality.

Countering the supporters of the machine with an eco-ethics stemming from their eco-spirituality, a host of characters in the play take forward this message through their self-sacrificial actions. Of the lot the name of Prince Abhijit is supreme.

Tagore explains how the, "... machine has injured the spirit of life and it is with this spirit that Abhijit has destroyed the machine, not with another machine...The tragedy is really of the man who uses the machine to injure: it is he who has to look for freedom from his own machine and destroy it if necessary" (Reddy 142). He opposes the eco-hubris of Bibhuti and Ranajit with Prince Abhijit's eco-dharmic consciousness which leads to the execution of an ecological karma.

"Ecospirituality is based in a fundamental belief in the sacredness of nature, Earth and Universe... In a personal level, this inherent sacredness of nature generally leads to a spiritually motivated engagement in the current environmental crisis of our planet... and a dedication to the justice and lone view of a sustainable prosperity to all" ("Ecospirituality"). Abhijit who is a founding, left by the springs of the waterfall Mukta-dhara by some wandering woman, has an eco-spirituality that is reflected in the special bond he shares with nature. He says 'In the sound of this water, I hear my mother's voice' " (18). He has an eco-centric world view where both human and nonhuman elements of nature shares equal importance. He engages in a communion with nature and finds meaning in life. For him the people of Shiv-tarai is no less important than those of Uttarakut. The desire to go beyond boundaries reflects his refusal to recognize human superiority and ownership over other aspects of nature, for boundaries become meaningful only when there is a question of ownership. He is thus able to look beyond the short sighted vision of his

foster father and by opening the Nandi pass he declares his point of view courageously.

Upon hearing about the damming of Mukta-dhara, Abhijit awakens as if from a slumber and recognizes his eco-dharma, "challenging institutionalised greed and hatred, a dharma that stands in courageous compassionate defence of the earth..." (Guhyapati). He says, "When her feet were bound in the iron fetters, I was startled out of a dream. I realized the truth..." (29). The dam for him is "... a monster that mutes the music of earth, and guffaws with its iron fangs at the sky" (30). It represents everything that the machine civilization stands for. It shows the "... tragic predicament of ... [scientific] knowledge which is so potent and so powerful but ultimately so empty and futile, for it has traded wisdom for information and the meaning of life for consumption" (Skolimowski 17).

Abhijit expresses his regard for earth and says, "I love this paradise, that is why I shall fight its demon" (30). He sees beauty in the smallest aspect of nature. "The spirit of human solidarity and kinship with all life is strengthened when we live with reverence for the mystery of being, gratitude for the gift of life, and humility regarding the human place in nature" (Ferrero 103). This we see in Abhijit as he says, "To each smallest thing that has sweetened my life, I offer my reverence today" (30). He decides to perform his eco-dharma and vows to pay the debt of his birth with his life.

John Hart, "defines ecojustice as 'the act of linking responsibility for the natural world with responsibility for the neighbour'" (Issac 223). Here Abhijit's fight is for 'eco-justice', which is a combination of maintaining the sustainability of environment as well as ensuring social justice to all. Bibhuti's dam negates both. The dam affects the stability of ecosystems on the one hand, on the other it's the violation of the land ethics for the Shiv-tarayans. By destroying the dam Abhijit aims to bring an end to this injustice. Though he is accused of being a traitor to his own country, Banwari's statement explains Abhijit's eco-spiritual and bio-centric perspective which justifies his action, "There is a greater body than Uttarakut, of which Uttarakut is a limb, and so is Shiv-tarai" (68). For Abhijit it is more than an execution of a moral obligation. Arne Naess discusses Immanuel Kant's concepts of 'moral acts' and 'beautiful acts' in relation to our living in harmony with nature. "Moral acts are those motivated by the intention to follow the moral laws... If we do what morals say is right because of positive inclination then we perform a *beautiful act*" (Drengson 92-93). Without any doubt we can say

Prince Abhijit's action is much more than a moral act, it is a beautiful act. In this endeavor he is supported by his foster father's uncle, Visvajit, Prince Sanjaya and Dhananjaya. Overcoming the challenges posed by his father, Bibhuti's men and his own countrymen, he destroys the machine to release Mukta-dhara.

When the Preamble of Earth Charter asks for universal responsibility through the principles of "respect and care for the community of life", "ecological integrity", "social and economic justice", "democracy, nonviolence and peace" (Ferrero 103-108), as a solution for the ecological crisis, we see all these in the eco-dharmic crusade of Tagore's Abhijit, whose life becomes his message.

Though the play was written in a time when ecological crisis was not a burning concern for the humanity, Tagore seems to have foreseen the path of destruction humanity is taking with its massive strides of technological advancements and blind faith in the rule of machine. Thus *Mukta-dhara* becomes an eco-drama of India which gives a very important message to the entire humanity, divined by the great mystic, well ahead of time.

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## JAKKAMMA: A DEITY OF THE SILENCED

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### Abstract

*Folktales are the transmitters of cultural memory. They represent the collective and inherent patterns of thought, thereby reflecting the cultural and social trajectory of a nation. Being part of the national heritage they are inextricably tied to the country's soil and wilderness. Ecofeminism critically analyses the relationship between women and nature in a historical and cultural context. In this regard, folktales offer plenty of characters that truly reflect the attitude of a nation towards women and nature. Feminist and ecological perspectives are interdependent. Liberation of women necessitates a revaluation of the natural world. There is a common pattern between the exploitation of the natural resources and animals and the subjugation of women. Goddess worship, an elementary part of ecofeminism, also shows the other aspects of the patriarchal society. The focus of the paper is not the study of an obsolete god or goddess, but a folk deity, Jakkamma, who is widely worshipped across south India even to this day. Her story can be interpreted in cultural, social and environmental contexts. An ecofeminist critique of the story exposes the patriarchal, aggressive and masculine tendencies that underlie the basis of the society.*

**Keywords:** chastity, deity, ecofeminism, folktales, patriarchy

Folktales are a repository of a nation's heritage. They preserve the past and encompass ideas on contemporary history. They embody the collective knowledge, experience, ethos and culture of a nation and take to the common populace who otherwise has no access to learn their roots. Besides being a transmitter of cultural memory, folktales incidentally promote ecological values. Folktales are rooted in nature and help people connect to nature at a deeper level in a meaningful way. In India, trees and plants are worshipped by people. In Indian folk tales and myths almost every type of trees and plants has its own story of its origin and existence. Folklores play a significant role in the preservation of the biodiversity of the forests.

Folktales in its own way teach social values and show the true heroes of the land, the sons of the soil. In the process of providing examples for the right way of living, they offer many role models who inspire men through generations. These role models, both men and women, despite not having an advantageous family background, reflect the so-called ideal characteristics of their gender. The male protagonists symbolise valour and uprightness, and the female protagonists stand for chastity and modesty, love, care and sometimes courage. There is no better way of understanding a country's conception of virtues, ideals and gender than through folktales. The gender issues and the socioeconomic conditions of the contemporary period are very well exposed in folktales. They are the stories of the soil, hence naturally there is a strong bond between folktales and environment.

Indian folktales, because of the multilinguistic and multicultural background, stand tall in the world of literature. A heritage and history of 5,000 years provide ample scope for the telling and retelling of the tales. The tale of Jakkamma looks interesting for three reasons: first, Jakkamma is widely worshipped across south India even today, hence it is a tale of a living god; second, Jakkamma clearly exemplifies the contemporary notion of a woman with all the strengths and weaknesses; third, the general conception of the bond between woman and nature is well established in the tale.

In the state of Tamil Nadu, Jakkamma is mainly worshipped by the Kambalathunaikers, though she is worshipped as the family deity by many Telugu and Kannada speaking communities. Interestingly, Jakkamma is worshipped in the form of sari by the Kambalathunaikers. She is adored as a model woman, who represents both the strength and the struggle of womenfolk.

To start with, it is believed that in a village in the state of Andhra Pradesh there lived a woman Avvabalu, a single parent, with her seven sons. Once she with her sons went to plough a land. There they found a new born baby crying under a bush. Avvabalu took home the baby and brought her up with great care. She named the baby Jakkamma, which means the mother who gives rain. She was affectionately called Amma Jakkamma by the family. It is interesting to note that she is called this way by the Kambalathunaikers even to this day.

When Jakkamma grew up into a young woman she was married off to Avvabalu's younger brother Aavalasiddhu. Needless to say, Jakkamma made an ideal wife. She gave birth to a baby boy. But for some reason, Jakkamma's brothers once insulted Aavalasiddhu. Unable to bear the insult to her husband, Jakkamma suggested to him that they leave the village immediately.

They crossed the land of Tungabhadra and settled in a village where they made a peaceful life raising cattle. Meanwhile, Avvabalu's family was badly hit by drought. Considering Jakkamma's absence as the reason for the famine, her brothers went to her village to bring her back home. At the time of their arrival, Jakkamma's husband was not at home. Jakkamma assured them that she would talk it out with her husband. The brothers left the place without seeing Aavalasiddhu. When Aavalasiddhu returned he found the trough empty and the cattle getting restless due to thirst. In a fit of rage, he hit Jakkamma with an axe. Jakkamma, lying in a pool of blood, explained everything to him. Overtaken by inexplicable grief Aavalasiddhu committed suicide. But Jakkamma somehow survived the assault.

Jakkamma had a hard time bringing up her child all alone. Once when she went to a forest in search of firewood, she saw a male bird trapped by a hunter. When the female bird pleaded with the hunter to release the male bird, he told her to bring him some fire. The female bird went far to get fire. But the hunter on getting the fire, roasted the male bird in it leaving the female bird aghast. Unable to bear the pain of separation, the female bird threw herself into the fire and died. This uncanny incident made Jakkamma think about her own life. On her return to the village she proclaimed to the villagers her decision to end her life by self-immolation, otherwise called *sati*. When she walked into fire, to the utter shock of the villagers, she just disappeared. Even more shocking to them was that her sari remained untouched by the fire. The villagers considered it as the demonstration of her chastity and glorified her as a deity. Thus, a goddess was born!

The tale though simple and incredulous offers an authentic view of the contemporary society with all its perverse ideas about woman and womanhood. Jakkamma's tale is a story of agrarian society centred around women. The archetypes presented in the tale of Jakkamma represent the collective unconscious of a society. In an ecofeminist perspective, the destruction of natural world has gone hand in hand with oppression of women. Because there is an intrinsic relationship between the way we treat nature and in the way we treat women.

Both nature and women are believed to symbolise love, care and patience. Dividing the society and the values into binary oppositions like man/woman, reason/emotion, mind/body, culture/nature and human/nature is a patriarchal tendency. The fundamental relationship of the patriarchal society with nature is one of domination. The main objective of ecofeminism is to identify the connection between the domination of women and that of nature, and if the connection is found to be harmful it dismantles it by exposing the patriarchal dichotomy in it (Warren).

Jakkamma means mother of rains. Rain also implies fertility and prosperity. This idea is reiterated when it was said that the family became very prosperous after the arrival of Jakkamma. In fact Jakkamma's brothers believed that it was her absence that caused famine in the village. The socio-cultural tendency of associating women with nature forms the basis of ecofeminism. Jakkamma symbolises not only prosperity but also the patriarchal dichotomy.

The violent assault on Jakkamma by her husband reflects the male tendency of the time. This debasing act was considered quite normal by many at least till a century back. Anandayi, another popular Tamil deity, was beaten to death by her husband on the suspicion of misconduct (4). Like the speaker in Wordsworth's *Nutting*, Aavalasiddhu regretted his action done in a fit of fury. His suicide only aggravated the problem for Jakkamma. As a single parent she had to bring up her child in a patriarchal society that imposes its own patriarchal values on women. In fact, it is this patriarchal value system that formulates rules in a society. These rules, however, in the long run are accepted as the divine ordinance. Sati and self-immolation exemplify this. Most often a country's philosophy, literature and religion are shaped and impacted by these time-bound patriarchal values. The key function of ecofeminism is to expose these deep-rooted perverse ideas and expose them to the society.

In this regard, the subplot of the story of the two birds and Jakkamma's subsequent decision to end her life by self-immolation show that such a practice was accepted as natural by the society. There are also many references to such an inhuman practice in few major Indian epics that have shaped the Indian ethos over a millennium. Jakkamma, the goddess of rain, thought it natural to uphold the social values of the day.

The parallel between the tale of Jakkamma and Sita of Ramayana is unmissable. Like Sita, Jakkamma was found on the farm. Both were believed to have had brought prosperity to their foster family. The parallel runs through

the tale until the fire walk. Maybe Jakkamma is a localised version of *The Ramayana*. The values and culture that Jakkamma teaches are surely a carryover from the ancient epic. Ecofeminists look for many of their insights to an analysis of the historical and cultural contexts in which the human and the nature have been anciently interwoven. In this regard, Jakkamma was a product of her time. Her action might shock the modern readers, but her 'disappearance' was only made up to make her a model woman. Her fatal decision was also the result of the conceptual structures of domination that construct women and nature in male-biased ways. A conceptual framework is a socially constructed set of basic beliefs, values, attitudes and assumptions that shapes and reflects how one views oneself and others (Warren).

Jakkamma very well fits into the patriarchal framework of society. She is a harbinger of prosperity, an obedient wife, a woman with no identity other than that of somebody's wife or mother and a loving, caring ever-forgiving woman like the Earth itself. As a reward for all these virtues, she is made into a goddess, in real terms, maybe a deity of the silenced. By inventing new symbols the masculine makes sure that nothing challenges their authority. Jakkamma was made to believe in the meaning of her name, goddess of rain, and she tried to live up to it throughout. It is the same belief that drives her to kill herself, making her guilty to survive after her husband's death. It is interesting to note that she did not feel guilty till her son had grown up. Had she committed suicide before he became an adult the society would have got only an 'imperfect woman', a failed mother who had shirked her duty of bringing up her son.

According to radical feminists, patriarchy subordinates women in sex-specific ways by defining women as beings

whose primary functions are either to bear or raise children or to specify male sexual desires (Warren). A woman who satisfies all these patriarchal expectations is often extolled and deified as in the case of Jakkamma, so that the patriarchal social structure is kept intact with such so-called role models. In this male-biased value system perceptions of diversity are arranged in a hierarchy, with man for his supposed higher value, placed at the top, and woman for her lower and dependent status, placed lower than him. The oppression is justified on the grounds of race, sexual orientation and class as well as species and gender (Garra). This perverse system ensures that women willingly accept this hierarchy for historical and traditional reasons.

The disappearance of Jakkamma and her sari not burnt in the fire are only versions added to prove her 'sanctity' and purity. Needless to say that a man's chastity is never questioned in such a regressive society. At the end of the day, after dismantling the patriarchal value system and the biased social structure what one sees at the core is a victim who was made to adhere to some regressive values willingly.

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## BARBARA KINGSOLVER'S *PRODIGAL SUMMER*: AN EXPRESSION FOR SYMBIOTIC MUTUALISM WITH THE NATURAL WORLD

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### Abstract

Barbara Kingsolver's *Prodigal Summer* focuses on the lives of four people in the Southern Appalachian mountain range - Deanna Wolfe (a forest ranger), Lusa Landowski (an entomologist), Garnett Walker and Nannie Rawley, who have a unique understanding of their natural surroundings. This paper is an attempt to approach the novel through an ecologically sensitive lens, the beliefs and practices of these introverted and solitary characters. Their experiences bring the awareness that, they are also like other creatures, part of a complex web that connects all living beings. They are made ecologically aware that human and nonhuman lives, including plants and animals, converge in real and meaningful ways and that "Solitude is only a human presumption". Contemporary environmental issues like agribusiness, use of chemical fertilizers, consequences of monoculturing, extinction of keystone predators, loss of biodiversity and most importantly the relationship between humans and the natural landscape are some of the major concerns in this novel. The theme that Kingsolver deftly develops through the three intertwined narratives in *Prodigal Summer* is in fact a respect for and understanding of nature for sustaining human life on earth to make it a better place to live in for our future progeny. She provides an insight to the readers for the need to step out of the anthropocentric model and to take their place in the web of life by learning to live in sync with the ecosystem.

**Keywords:** Biodiversity, Symbiosis, Agri-business, Keystone Predator

The most influential of all radical forms of environmentalism is deep ecology. It demands recognition of the intrinsic value in nature whereas 'shallow' approaches take an instrumental view, arguing for preservation of natural resources only for the sake of human consumption. "Deep ecology is concerned with encouraging an egalitarian attitude on the part of humans not only toward all *members* of the ecosphere, but even all identifiable *entities* or *forms* in the ecosphere. Thus, this attitude is intended to extend, for example, to such entities (or forms) as rivers, landscapes and even species and social systems considered in their own right." (Sessions 270). If a value resides everywhere, it resides nowhere, as it ceases to be a basis for making distinctions and decisions.

Deep ecology identifies the anthropocentric dualism (humanity and nature) as the ultimate source of all anti-ecological beliefs and practices. Humans are not *distinguished* from nature, but *opposed* to it in ways that make humans radically alienated from and superior to it. This polarisation or 'hyperseparation' often involves a denial of the real relationship of the superior term to the inferior. (Plumwood 47-55) Resisting speciesism and viewing the world through an ecocritical lens of horizontal

power structure, can result in humans being reverent towards the land and ecologically conscious of human and non-human exploitation. Barbara Kingsolver's *Prodigal Summer* (2000) highlights the importance of biodiversity and the inescapable interconnectedness between human and the non-human world, the need for a Symbiotic Mutualism where different species can exist in a relationship for mutual benefit.

Barbara Kingsolver is an American novelist, essayist, poet, and a political activist raised in rural Kentucky. Before she made her living as a writer, Kingsolver earned degrees in biology and worked as a scientist which has greatly influenced her environmental writings. Her writings have received much acclaim and she has received many awards for several of her works like the American Library Association award (for *Bean Trees* and *Homeland*) and the Edward Abbey Ecofiction award (for *Animal Dreams*) to name a few.

As Bert Bender has observed, it should be noted that no American, man or woman has embraced Darwin more passionately than Barbara Kingsolver. *Prodigal Summer* not only celebrates and explores Darwin's idea of the reproductive force in evolutionary biology, it is also a meditation on his inseparable fundamental ecological

insight that all organic things are bound together by a web of complex relations.

This novel can be paralleled with one of her non – fictional essay entitled “Small Wonder” in her book by the same name where she writes, Bears and wolves are our fairytale arch enemies, and these tales teach our children only and always, to kill them, rather than to tiptoe past and let them sleep. We need new bear and wolf tales for our times, since so many of our old ones seem to be doing us no good. We must stop in our tracks before every kind of life we know arrives at the brink of extinction. (10)

Predator extinction is one of the major issues that prompted Kingsolver to write this novel. Besides which, she also focuses on the negativism of agribusiness and the extinction of the native American Chestnut tree that once provided livelihood and shelter for many generations. They had succumbed to an Asian fungal blight and farming could no longer be relied on. Kingsolver believed that agribusiness and consumer ignorance were driving small farmers out of business. The farming practices dependent on chemicals were threatening local ecosystems in smaller bio-regions like southern Appalachia – the place where Kingsolver grew up and which is also the setting of the novel. Suzanne W. Jones rightly observes in her article “The Southern Family Farm as Endangered Species” that Kingsolver’s “academic training in evolutionary biology and ecology, her abiding concern for community and family and her intimate knowledge of a particular place combine to produce no less than a blueprint for saving the small family farm and for restoring ecological balance in a southern Appalachian bioregion that is struggling to survive.” (84)

The three intertwined narrative of *Prodigal Summer* unfolds itself from the perspective of three central characters – Deanna Wolfe, Lusa Landowski and Garnett Walker through whom Kingsolver tries to educate the readers and the locals on the urgent need for an environmental ethic.

In the first narrative, Deanna, a forest ranger turns to nature after being rejected by her husband. She is greatly thrilled when she comes to know that a group of female coyotes have relocated themselves in the forest which signals the healthy functioning of an ecosystem. She strives to locate and protect the coyote family, in order to fill the ecological void left by the extinction of the little red wolf. The dilemma in her life comes when she has to protect the coyotes from Eddie Bondo, an intruding bounty hunter who invades and interrupts her solitary Edenic existence. Deanna’s narrative reveals her as a lonely character living a secluded life for two years on the

Zebulon Mountain. But she does not consider herself to be in isolation as she sees herself as a part of the ecosystem she inhabits. She suggests the interconnectedness of all things when she tells Eddie, “There’s no such thing as *alone*. That animal was going to do something important in it’s time – eat a lot of things or be eaten ...They can’t *all* be your enemy, because one of this connected things is you.” (322). It is a reminder not only to Eddie but all the readers that killing predators which top the biotic pyramid will have an effect on every being below it.

Having done her master’s thesis on coyotes, their habits and their habitats, she knows exactly how these predators will function in the ecosystem. She says, “If they’re good, then their prey is good, and its food is good.” (13). She is portrayed as someone who cares extensively about the food chain of the animal world. However, the local farmers down the mountain consider these coyotes only as a menace to their livestock. So she takes on the onus of keeping the existence of the coyotes as her ‘secret’ both from the local farmers and Eddie and decides not to go anywhere near the den when they are around.

It is apparent that she loves all creatures as “whole species” (177) so that the ecosystem can function as it should. She realises the intrinsic value of every creature and understands that every species has its own feelings of self-centeredness, an idea which others fail to understand. This idea put forth by Deanna corresponds to Aldo Leopold’s holistic and eco-centric call for a “Land Ethic” that changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land community to ordinary dwellers, to understand the meaning of harmonious co-existence.

Leopold approves of hunting but disapproves the eradication of keystone predators (like the coyotes) because their elimination would impoverish the ecosystem. In his book *A Sand County Almanac* he gives a classic account of how the eradication of wolf disturbed the ecosystem in the mountain regions. Removing such predators can overpopulate the species below them (like deer) which harm the ecosystem by over-eating the plant layer near the base of the pyramid. (Wenz 108). In *Prodigal Summer*, Eddie imagines that Deanna is opposed to hunting. So he is surprised when she shows her eagerness to eat a wild turkey that he had killed. Deanna explains that turkey is “a prey species. It has fallen prey to us... Predation is a sacrament Eddie; it culls out the sick and the old, keeps populations from going through their own roofs.” (137). Leopold’s pyramid scheme is similar to Deanna’s who puts forth the idea that when one kills a



coyote, they've "let loose an extra thousand rodents on the world that he would've eaten. It's not just one life." (320)

At the end of this narrative, Eddie, after having read Deanna's thesis leaves her cabin once and for all quietly without any intimation. The reader is left to wonder what this sudden action is meant to imply – whether it is a quiet consent to Deanna's reasoning on the importance of the existence of coyotes or whether he leaves her just as a matter of respect for her. However, she later reasons that his leaving was a "gift". (435)

The second narrative deals with Garnett Walker, a narrow minded and self-centered man. He thinks that his attempts to restore the American Chestnut tree, his family's source of living which had gone extinct due to blight would help restore his ancestors' fall from the status of land barons of that area. In contrast to Deanna, he does not think how the restoration of a single species can help in the ecology of the mountainside. He looks at it so much in terms of his own gain.

Though a man of good intentions, he stands stubborn when it comes to his ideologies, trying to endorse his intellectual superiority over his neighbor, Nannie Rawley. In order to maintain his image as an orderly and neat person, he feels that he needs to spray the unwanted weeds on the roadside but Nannie on the other hand feels that this will only pollute the air and affect her organic apple trees. She believes that the ecosystem naturally has checks that work better than the insecticides and herbicides that Garnett uses to maintain his yard. While Garnett spends most of his retired life in trying to successfully crossbreed the American Chestnut with the blight resistant Chinese Chestnut, Nannie allows the natural pollinators in her backyard to do the job of crossbreeding.

Ironically, Nannie seems to be more ecologically aware than the retired agricultural teacher, Garnett. She enlightens him with the 'Volterra Principle'- that there are two kinds of bugs, the plant eaters and the bug eaters. "Predator bugs (bug eaters) don't reproduce so fast, as a rule. But see, that works out right in nature because one predator eats a world of pest bugs (plant eaters) in its life." (278) She further adds that,

When you spray a field with a broad spectrum insecticide like Sevin, you kill the pest bugs *and* the predator bugs, bang ... then the pests that survive will increase after the spraying, fast, because most of their enemies have just disappeared. And the predators will *decrease* because they've lost most of their food supply. So in the lag between sprayings you end up boosting the

number of bugs you don't want and wiping out the ones you need. (278)

Nannie throws light on how the present day agricultural chemical industry works when she comments that "The more money you spend on that stuff, the more you need." (278) Garnett, a religious fundamentalist, believes that humans have dominion over the earth and so pays no heed to the consequences of using herbicides and broad spectrum insecticides to protect his hybrid chestnut seedlings. However, eventually he makes an effort to become less self-centered, a primary step in perceiving one's world ecologically. Nannie makes an ironic point by telling Garnett, "I do believe humankind holds a special place in the world. It's the same place held by a mockingbird, in his opinion, and a salamander in whatever he has that resembles a mind of his own. Every creature alive believes this: the centre of everything is *me*." (215)

The novel also throws light on the dreaded consequences of monoculturing, an addiction of the modern day farmers, since only a few types of crops are valued in the market. We fail to realise that "There is nothing so important as having variety. That's how life can still go on when the world changes." (390) Lusa's narrative informs the reader that this 'valued' crop would be tobacco. Lusa's brothers- in-law who are engaged in tobacco cultivation force her to perpetuate the same exploitative practices over her newly inherited land after the untimely death of her husband, Cole Widener in order to boost the cigarette industry. While referring to her unwillingness to follow this monoculturing practice of growing tobacco she says, "We're sitting on some of the richest dirt on this planet, and I'm going to grow *drugs* instead of food? ... Knowing full well the bottom's going to drop out any day now." (124)

Suzanne W. Jones stresses in her article that the southern Appalachia suffers because of the farmers' resistance to change their practices. The insecticides that the local US Agricultural Extension Service has promoted to protect cash crops like tobacco harm other crops, killing the beneficial pollinators needed by organic orchard growers like Nannie Rawley. Their expensive rates have driven many farmers out of business and more than a few inhabitants of the fictional town Egg Fork have succumbed to dreadful diseases like cancer and other physical ailments. But the misguided farmers continue to grow tobacco in spite of knowing the serious repercussions of monoculture (reduced diversity of plants and animals, increased difficulty in nutrient recycling resulting in lesser yield and increased cost of crop maintenance.) They fail to

realise that no one thing can take up too much space. Lusa decides to use unconventional agricultural practices against the desire of her brothers-in-law.

Through the character of Lusa, Kingsolver emphasizes the necessity of having 'human diversity' in the ecosystem. Lusa draws on her own fortunate variation, culturally (being born to Muslim mother and Jewish father) by raising meat goats to satisfy the New York market for Muslim and Jewish feast days. Before she can be accepted as a member of the community and the family, she must overcome their bias against raising goats and their rural prejudices against city people. She is a "religious mongrel" (438) with the knowledge of Judaism and Islam which the locals do not possess. She knows that the holy days of these religions will converge during her first year of farming and create a demand for goats for these celebrations. So she decides to raise goats organically and sell them to a cousin in New York. To her own surprise and that of the Widener family, she succeeds. Lusa's success in raising goats goes a long way towards elevating her position in the community and also helps pull the Widener farm out of debt. Her arrival, like that of the coyotes helps in rectifying the imbalance in the ecosystem. This serves as a solution to another local problem as well - the surplus breeding of goats in the county which the children had raised for a 4-H project.

But Lusa is not naïve to think that goats can become her sole business. She knows that the following year she may not raise "goats at all, depending on the calendar." (438) She contemplates on growing grass seed and take advantage of the US government's process of rectification of an ecological error. The government was providing monetary support for planting native blue steam grass instead of the non-native fescue which had destroyed the habitat of the agri-industrialists. Kingsolver has Lusa recognise that good farming practices, in contrast to the stagnant techniques of the Zebulon County farmers, will always require flexibility or the "ability to adapt to local conditions or needs." (Berry 159)

Lusa also advocates the growing of subsistence crops alongside cash crops. She cans and freezes organic fruits and vegetables from her garden in order to avoid shopping from Kroger market. This reflects their detachment from nature and being trapped in a consumerist society. What Kingsolver seems to suggest here is that, the Widener's dependence on the market has diminished the quality of their food and also changed the nature of their relationship with the land. This supports Ynestra King's idea of how social and natural life has been simplified to the inorganic for the benefit of market society.

The alternative ecological practices followed by the three protagonists are ways in which one can restore some diversity in the ecosystem. These traditional practices

rooted in indigenous knowledge helps them to connect with the non-human world on another level both physically and emotionally. Both the opening and the closing chapters of the novel have a similar pattern- a man carrying a gun standing still in the woods, Kingsolver's symbol of man's destructive and limited ecological understanding. It is high time man realises that "Solitude is a human presumption. Every quiet step is thunder to beetle life underfoot, a tug of impalpable thread on the web pulling mate to mate and predator to prey, a beginning or an end." (444). Kingsolver's message is one of environmental responsibility within a microscopic Appalachian landscape. The Appalachian landscape is only a microcosm of the macrocosm. The narrative urges the reader to contemplate on man's relationship with the land and to remind himself that we are all bound together by a web of complex relations. Garnett Walker, the most fully developed male character stands as a hope for potential rebirth – a resurrection from our deep pits of ignorance. In offering her story of hope, Kingsolver allows us to recognise that the ecological imbalance can be rectified only when humans leave behind their parasitic nature and adopt a symbiotic approach to life.

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## AN ANALYSIS OF 'THIRD NATURE' IN BARBARA KINGSOLVER'S *THE POISONWOOD BIBLE*

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### Abstract

The present study intends to analyze the significance of domestic gardens in Kingsolver's *The Poisonwood Bible*. Garden landscapes in both spatial and figurative dimensions offer endless critical examination in literary studies. Literary gardens, in the contemporary women writing, not only focus on the physical and psychological manifestation of the characters but also intend to create a change in the literary tradition itself. Since literary gardens do not bound to one particular place, and that they are quite flexible, it is understandable that even the smallest garden can provide multiple levels of interpretations to both the text as well as the very context of writing. Barbara Kingsolver's literary gardens act as an outlet for the author's environmental sensibility as well as a medium to impart psychological growth of her characters. The study attempts to find out that the gardens portrayed by Kingsolver either act as a medium of hope or become a medium by itself in catalyzing the central action of the plot. The study thus infers that the various phases of a character's life, transition, and growth are affected and effected depending upon their kinship with the domestic gardens.

**Keywords:** literary gardens; landscape; third nature

Garden landscapes in both spatial and figurative dimensions offer endless critical examination in literary studies. The origin of literary gardens in American literature can be traced back to the writings of Annette Kolodny who questions the anthropocentric depictions of a landscape in literature. Annette Kolodny in *The Land Before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630-1860* envisions how male writers often relate Adam, as a representative of men, who holds an extraordinary vigour to capture a 'virgin continent,' the latter meaning both women and land (xiii). Kolodny also identifies that women are always relegated to their domestic spheres and their presence in agricultural lands or battlefields is never stressed upon. As a result, the literary gardens, in many women author's works, turn out to be the voice of a female character, her domestic as well as social experiences in a culturally and socially biased society. These women writers often neglect the classical or archetypal gardens created by men and embrace the domestic gardens to present their assorted themes. Hence, the literary gardens, in the contemporary women writing, not only focus on the physical and psychological manifestation of the characters but also intend to create a change in the literary tradition itself. Domestic gardens according to Shelley Boyd are "immediate" landscapes that

are "proximate to the home" and usually "modest in scale, and tended for both practical and aesthetic reasons" (1806). In *The Poetics of Gardens* Moore, Mitchell, and Turnbull identify gardens as a sacramental place where the life of humans is identified and imbibed into. To the authors, a place becomes a garden only when it is influenced by human 'actions' and 'dreams' vis-à-vis. Substantiating Moore, Mitchell, and Turnbull's point of view is John Dixon Hunt's "The Idea of a Garden and the Three Natures" in *Greater Perfections: The Practice of Garden Theory* where he provides an arithmetical classification of nature as first, second and third. Hunt greatly refers to the Italian humanists Bartolomio Taegio and Jacopo Bonfadio's idea of *terza natura* (third nature) and their inspiration from Cicero's *De natura deorum* to validate his idea of gardens. According to him, the 'first nature' is the primeval faction of the natural world through which the 'second' is created. The 'first nature' is the same as what Aldo Leopold refers to in his *Sand County Almanac* as 'raw wilderness' that is not meant for a 'luxurious display,' or human 'consumption' (Hunt 32). Hunt further adds that this primordial nature is "the raw materials of human industry and the territory of the gods" (34). The *alteram naturam* (second nature) is "what today we would call the cultural landscape: agriculture, urban developments, roads,

bridges, ports, and other infrastructures" (Hunt 33). He then refers to gardens as *terza natura* (third nature) which takes its place based on "a scale or hierarchy of human intervention into the physical world" (Hunt 34).

The garden landscape that comes under the 'third nature,' according to Hunt, is the one that is "always engaged in a dialogue" with the 'first' and 'second nature' (71) hence provides endless provision for critical examination. The mimetic aspect of 'third nature' offers "a significant interpretive lens" for the study of humans as well as their environment (Boyd 1808). Since literary gardens do not bound to one particular place, and that they are quite flexible, it is understandable that even the smallest garden is able to provide multiple levels of interpretations to both the text as well as the very context of writing. To emphasize, Caroline Thorpe in her 2016 article "Great literary gardens: from 'Hamlet' to 'Lady Chatterley's Lover'" traces the metamorphic gardens in the works of writers like William Shakespeare, Jane Austen, Virginia Woolf, D. H. Lawrence, and Charles Dickens. She identifies their gardens as an aesthetic trope that depicts the mood of the characters. Similarly, writers like Harriet Beecher Stowe, Edith Wharton, Alice Walker, and Barbara Kingsolver (re)interpret the features of actual gardens, its role in the life, transition, and growth of the characters that significantly contributes to both literary and symbolical meanings. Stowe's literary gardens, for instance, are the expression of her racial and abolitionist ideals. Likewise, Wharton and Alcott offer a poetic and allusive image to their literary gardens. Alice Walker, on the other hand, believes that the gardens are a space to nurture a women's creativity and not a place that is meant for sensual or aesthetic wonder. Barbara Kingsolver's literary gardens act as an outlet for the author's environmental sensibility, as well as, a medium to impart psychological growth of her characters. DeMarr rightly asserts that the author's characters are intensely allied to the landscapes they choose to live in and emerge as both forceful and responsible towards it. Even though the depiction of gardens is limited in her novels, their part in the character's coming-of-age is noteworthy. The present study attempts to find out that the gardens portrayed by Kingsolver in *The Poisonwood Bible* (1998) acts as a medium of hope, or become a medium by itself in catalyzing the plot towards central action and highlights the dominance of anthropocentrism.

Kingsolver's fourth novel, *The Poisonwood Bible* presents Nathan Price's garden as a representative of the patriarchal domination over women and Africa's natural

world. Though the author highlights the "untamed wilderness for a garden" backdrop of Africa, she employs Nathan's garden to signify the negative effects of human's intrusion in the 'first nature' (PB 42). Nathan's "demonstration garden" is his first step to lure the Congolese people towards Christianity through which he can establish his "first African miracle: an infinite chain of benevolence" (PB 41-42). But with the use of American seeds for his garden turns out to be nothing but a disaster in the wild African jungle. For once Nathan loses all his crops to rain and the next problem he encountered is the lack of pollinators. Nathan later learns from Mama Tataba, a neighbour, that the land should be tilled to small mounds like hills; otherwise, the crops will get spoiled because of the unpredictable rains. After reshaping the garden to mounds the plants bloom wildly like a "funeral parlour" but without any fruit (PB 89). Mama Tataba then explains Nathan that the African pollinators do not recognize the strange American plants, so the plants even though grow well it cannot carry out pollination. Similarly, even though the native people have accepted Nathan and his family in their village, they refuse to pay heed to Nathan's alien religion and his call for baptism. Nathan's pride on his "carefully tended garden" (Wagner-Martin 105) is quite relative to his meticulously prepared ceremonial addresses. But like his garden, his passionately rendered gospels were misread because of his faulty use of native language. Nathan's sprightly attempt to talk Kikongo, the language of the Congolese people, rather than enlightening the people confused them. For example, Nathan repeatedly utters "TATA JESUS is BANGALA!" in all his Sunday sermons (PB 225). In Kikongo, the word 'bangala' refers to the "most precious and the most insufferable and the poison-wood," a deadly native tree (PB 410). While Nathan's idea of using 'bangala' is to praise the Lord, his wrong pronunciation—'bangalur'—only referred to Jesus as either intolerable or a poisonous tree. So Nathan's failure in gardening is similar to his failure in converting the native inhabitants to Christianity. Kingsolver strongly believes gardening as a "spiritual conversation" (*Agrarian Reader* xvii) and through Leah's vision, the author explicitly remarks upon Nathan's ignominious failure in both gardening as well as religion. After the cultivation of the native plants like frangipani, oranges, bananas, pineapple, and papaya Leah, one of the daughters of Nathan, admires that the garden looks like the 'Garden of Eden.' But immediately she realizes that the garden was not "purely [a] paradise" because they were merely accepting its yield for it grew free of cost and that they

have nothing else to eat (PB 115-118). Similarly, Nathan's irrational dominance in his home is tolerated only because he was the breadwinner of the family.

Kingsolver as a contrast to Nathan introduces Leah, and Anatole—Leah's husband, to exemplify that it is the land that owns human beings, not the vice versa. It is through them Kingsolver correlates America's ravenous exploitation of Congolese lands during colonization, along with the patriarchal domination over womanhood. Orleanna, the wife of Nathan, just like the Congolese lands, more than any other women characters in the novel, is a victim of Nathan's patriarchal oppression. Orleanna whose life she calls as a business of "growing where planted" (PB 384), seeks liberation by leaving her husband, but not before paying a huge price, the life of her youngest daughter Ruth May. Her symbolical emancipation is seen at the near end of the novel when she plants her favourite flowers in her own garden—which was once her husband's domain—and simply in the way she wants her garden to be. She even attains financial security through her garden's yields, and finds a remedy for the ever lasted wounds of Nathan's domination. The critic Wagner-Martin describes her freedom as follows: "from her peaceful garden on quiet Sanderling Island off the coast of Georgia, Orleanna does become a kind of tranquil Robinson Crusoe figure" (104-105). Adah, the third daughter of Nathan and Orleanna, adores her mother's talent for gardening and proclaims "it turns out Mother has an extraordinary talent for flowers. She was an entire botanical garden waiting to happen" (PB 464). Leah, on the other hand, gets introduced to the sustainable farming practices—"no commodity agriculture" (PB 588)—and begins to cultivate crops without harming the African "rowdy society of flora and fauna" (PB 525). Leah, in the words of Kolodny, turns out as both a 'domesticator' and an 'adventurer' who belong to the fields (240). She tells Anatole that gardens were possible in America "because nature is organized [in] a whole different way" (PB 322) and "to be here [Africa]... requires a new agriculture, a new sort of planning, a new religion.... Poor Father, who was just one of a million men who never did catch on" (PB 594). Her garden in the words of Hunt thus "become[s] more sophisticated, more deliberate, and more complex in their mixture of culture and nature than agricultural land" (34). Kingsolver presents the elder daughter Rachel's artificial garden as analogous to Nathan's destructive garden; moreover, Rachel's garden is her sole companion to help overcome her loneliness. Orleanna and Leah's are free-spirited and act as a stark contrast to the former.

Kingsolver through *The Poisonwood Bible* exemplifies that "one's relationship to the land, to consumption and food, is a religious matter... the decision to attend to the health of one's habitat and food chain is a spiritual choice. It's also a political choice, a scientific one, a personal and a convivial one" (*Agrarian Reader* xvii). Of all the novels *The Poisonwood Bible* validates Francis and Hester's view that gardens are "powerful settings for human life, transcending time, place, and culture. Gardens are mirrors of ourselves, reflections of sensual and personal experience. By making gardens, using or admiring them, and dreaming about them, we create our own idealized order of nature and culture. Gardens connect us to our collective and primeval pasts" (2). Kingsolver's non-fiction *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* (AVM) affirms how "even the smallest backyard garden offers emotional rewards" (177). The gardens depicted in the novels thus becomes "truly an art of milieu and a space of heightened expression" (Boyd 1808). The author in her foreword to *The Essential Agrarian Reader* reveals that the dirt where the food grows is the determining factor of human's "survival as a species" (xii). Having grown and currently living in an agrarian community Kingsolver believes that it is obligatory for a person to "share a respect for land that gives us food" (*Agrarian Reader* xvi), and to her gardening, itself is a basic fundamental of life. She refers to the U.S. Census Bureau report that over one-quarter of the entire population in the U.S. grow their own food, which means gardens in the current milieu has become more than a "food preference paradigm" (AVM 20). Gardening also widens the growth of the country's economy by means of agritourism or through the famous organic food restaurants. While the political and social inferences remain understated, the personal aspect is seen dominating the study. The article thus identifies that the domestic gardens act both as a catalyst to voice one's personal identity and a medium of expression through which the personal identity emerges into a collective or communal identity. Kingsolver's novels also respond to Anne Kolodny's discontentment for the lack of a strong woman's voice in the landscape narratives. To the author, women who engage in gardening tend to shatter the patriarchal myths and through their gardens they reclaim and define their self-identity.

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## AN ECO-CRITICAL STUDY OF THE TWO POEMS “THE SONG TO THE KUYIL” AND “THE SONG TO THE DARK RAIN CLOUDS” FROM AṆṬĀL’S NACCIYAR TIRUMOLĪ

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### Abstract

*Kodhai, later apotheosized as Antal, is among the Alwar poets. Alwar were the 12 Vaishnavite poets of the south India, who composed poems in praise of Lord Vishnu. Āṇṭāl's two primal works are Tiruppavai and Nācciyār Tirumolī. The two poems "The Song to the Kuyil" and "The Song to the Dark Rain Clouds" deal with a quest for a divine union with Lord Shiva. In these poems she uses the Kuyil bird, and rain clouds as her messengers. The study analyses the position of nature in the text and the attitude of the persona to nature. It also analyses a few of the Cankam poetry techniques used in these poems. The methodology adopted in this study is eco-critical analysis for textual analysis.*

**Keywords:** Ecocriticism, Antal, Cankam poetry

Āṇṭā ! appeals to various sentient and insentient beings such as Kāmadeva (the god of desire), the clouds, and the *kuyil* bird. She doesn't separate them as sentient or insentient and she treats them with the same respect. She appeals to the rain clouds, and the kuyil the same way she appealed to the god Kāmadeva ; thereby she places them in the position of gods.

The very titles of these poems "The Song to the Kuyil" and "The Song to the Dark Rain Clouds" show the position of nature in the poems. By dedicating the song like poem to the Kuyil and the Rain Clouds, the poet depicts the power they have over the persona. The persona's desperation to attain her lover puts her in a humbling position to these messengers as she depends on them to carry her message. Thus, by dedicating these poems she implores them to aid her in her quest to attain her lord. "Women in India are an intimate part of nature, both in imagination and in practice", says Vandana Shiva in "Women in Nature" from *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development*. This can also be seen in these poems as well. The persona's close relationship with the Kuyil, and the Rain Clouds is clearly portrayed by the poet. Her only means to express her longing to her Lord is through nature.

In "The Song to the Kuyil" Āṇṭāl uses a sentient being (*cetana*) to deliver her message to Viṣṇu and thus, determine her fate.

She uses a number of rhetorical devices to convince it to indulge her wishes. She contrasts her own separation from her beloved with the blissful life of the *kuyil* and its mate and declares this disparity unfair, bribes it with a new friendship with her pet parrot and promises to bow down before it. Thus, she has a conversation with the bird. Even though it is in a human language and can be easily interpreted as anthropocentric action, the very act of conversing to a bird, which is not normally done by humans today, creates a sense of equity between the persona and the bird. The persona converses with the Kuyil bird as she would converse with her female companion, thus, treating the kuyil bird as her equal. Furthermore, by comparing her situation to the bird's situation she gives equal importance to the bird's relationship as well. The act of imploring and not ordering also places the bird in an equal position. At the same time, Āṇṭāl blackmails saying she will not reveal her plans to the Kuyil bird if it refuses to do her bidding. Such a strategy is used only for one's companion, who is very much interested in learning about the plan. Thus, the relationship that Āṇṭāl shares with the Kuyil is very interesting.

In "The Song to the Kuyil", Āṇṭāl describes her beloved as "lustrous as the green -hued parrot" (Āṇṭāl 5.9), and while Āṇṭāl does not make mention of it, the parrot is the vehicle (*vāhana*) of Kāmadeva. The parrot is also one of her

iconographic markers, held either in her right or left hand. The parrot recurs in several places in the poem, most significantly in "The Song of Sacred Places" (verse 9) where it torments her by repeating "Govinda ! Govinda!" Birds and parrots are infamous in both Sanskrit and Tamil poetry for tormenting or embarrassing the heroine in various ways, especially by speaking of lovemaking or of the hero's name at inopportune moments. This shows how "an object like conch, cloud, kuyil and every other article of nature seems to be apathetic to her love... [and hence] placed in an antagonistic position" (Sarada). Hence, nature is sometimes belittled and suggested to have limited knowledge. While imploring the Kuyil to deliver her message she uses her parrot as a bribe. While the parrot is useful to her when she pleads with the Kuyil, it also is portrayed as unintelligible and as a hindrance. This can also be argued as the man's inability to value nature when he finds it useless.

Periyavāccāṇ Piḷḷai, one of the earliest commentators, posits that she chooses the *kuyil* bird for two reasons. First, it can both hear and speak. Therefore, it can take the message to the lord of Vēṅkaṭam as well as bring his message back. Second, as a bird it has the endurance to navigate treacherous paths and fly great distances. From this point of view, we can see that she implores the Kuyil bird because of its uses and not because she wants to strike a relationship with the bird. Thus, we also see how humans respect something only when it has a value to them. Arne Naess argues "the well being and flourishing ...non-human life on Earth [has] value in [itself]... independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes". Tom regan also says "the presence of inherent value in a natural object is independent of any awareness, interest or appreciation of it by any conscious being." In that sense it could be looked as an anthropocentric view that the poet presents.

The *Tirumoli* continues the messenger theme in "The Song to the Dark Rain Clouds". Messenger poems are a common genre of early Indic love poetry, possibly made most famous by Kālidāsa's *Meghadūta*. In Indic literature, especially in Cangam literature, Mullai landscape's climate is cloudiness, which signifies the time for union and an absent hero invariably promising to return

before the coming of the monsoons. Here Āṇṭāl recruits the dark rain clouds as messengers to the lord of Vēṅkaṭam to inform him of her terrible plight of loneliness and suffering. Āṇṭāl erroneously thinks that like Rāma who followed the abducted Sītā to Laṅka, he would follow the clouds in order to hurry to her. It does not take Āṇṭāl long to realize that she is wrong. She is overcome by her great sorrow and she weeps. Āṇṭāl, unfortunately, has no one to turn to, except these insentient beings, the clouds. Thus, the clouds also become a consoling companion to her.

The *kuyil* section also adapts several motifs common to Tamil Caṅkam poetry to mark the extent of her separation from her beloved. This in itself is not unusual, as the *Nācciyār Tirumoli* is replete with delicate allusions to Caṅkam poetry. According to Abraham Mariaselvam in his book "The Song of Songs and Ancient Tamil Love Poems" Kuyil is a bird associated with Mullai, which is the landscape for lovers separation. Moreover, we also see that the god ascribed to that landscape is Murugan, who is also Vishnu. Further more, Mariaselvam also says that Kuyil's song announces the return of the lover.

The first verse in "The Song to the Dark Rain Clouds", which is "My tears gather and spill between my breasts like waterfalls" (Āṇṭāl 8.1) alludes to *Kuruntokai* 325 which says,

The place between my breasts  
has filled up with tears,  
has become a deep pond  
where a black-legged  
white heron feeds. (325)

This is clearly the poetic landscape of cangam literature where her longing for the beloved transforms Āṇṭāl's body into Tiruvēṅkaṭam, replete with mountains (breasts) and waterfalls (her tears). Waterfalls and mountain is from the Kurunji landscape. We also see that the clouds are described here as "war elephants". The elephant is also the animal from Kurunji landscape. Thus, the two poems have delicate allusions to Caṅkam poetry.

The study reveals that nature is seen as equal and as a hindrance at different situations by the same persona. The position of nature is determined by the value it possesses for the persona at the given time. The poems can be seen



as a text that depicts a close relationship with nature. Yet at the same time the text can seem anthropocentric. Thus, both viewpoints are possible with this poem. However, it does acknowledge nature's role in our lives both physically and spiritually more than most of the texts. Hence, it can still be read as an eco-sensitive text.

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## DIGITAL INDIA WITH PLASTIC RICE: AN ECO CULTURAL PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY

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### Abstract

*Internet has become the new nutrition for the current generation. Internet has become the new blackboard for this generation. Chance of being with the nature and enjoying nature has become a hard time for this generation. Naming, it as civilization and updating, we genuinely going towards mishap. The history of agriculture in India dates back to Indus valley civilization, that much antique is our ecological nature of our country. Subsequently, Natural history in India has a long historical heritage as back to Vedas. Even then, Indians, particularly Digital Indians are in the state of using plastic rice as their nutrition without an option for their survival, even knowing the damage, and causing more damage towards the ecological change and environmental disaster that is leading our earth to a more disastrous place for the future generation than we are. This paper tries to analyze the minds of certain characters from literature of various times that portrays the changes happened in mother earth and the way human beings moving away from nature with so called development and modern civilization under a Eco psychoanalytic perspective. It not only conveys examples from Indian literature however the paper tries to convey globalized examples to outcast the environmental mishaps. Primary aim is to transmit that we as human beings should not take mother earth for granted.*

**Keywords:** Eco criticism, culture, Indian mindset, modern technology, social media, preserving nature.

### Digital India with plastic rice: An Eco cultural Psychoanalytic study

There is something terribly wrong with the typical Indian mindset for decades. Our culture, nature and psychology is decaying as we all started to forget our way of living, trends and culture and moving towards brands rather than to preserve our own culture. Young generation is more focused on getting likes on Facebook, instagram, twitter and so on rather than to gain knowledge and preserve our culture. Times are changing as such Indians mindset, living style and culture are also changing. Change is inevitable and good thing but when it's not helpful for others that could not be accepted. Such is the change happening at this moment. If we cannot save our culture then how come we Indians going to preserve the nature which is itself our culture in the past. People these days have become so self-centered, vain and unsympathetic to others and extremely selfish. Hence we find our public so silent about the various issues that affecting our nature and people.

"Learn how to see. Realize that everything connects to everything else" is the realization and self-evident truth conveyed by Leonardo da Vinci many centuries back. However, we modern civilized technological human beings have not realized the words of da Vinci, even though we realize at times as we are hyper active at times in recent years, our culture, time and

situation makes us not to analyze and understand much about the idea of da Vinci with the present words. As Bruce Mau stated "When everything is connected to everything else, better or worse, everything matters" we, so called, the humans of 21<sup>st</sup> century are not the only generation depends upon nature for our life. Every generation had leaded their life depending upon our mother earth for their survival and betterment. However the previous generations cared about the nature and preserved it and worshipped it as a divinity. The tech generation is totally self-minded, they are in need of nature but they will not care about preserving it or flourishing. The modern people became short minded and crooked without knowing the connection and thinking about the future has been the major cause of degradation of nature. This paper tries to extract the impacts from literary works that portrays the changing attitude of humans on nature. Since we are in globalized world, it is analyzed with three different texts to show the exact scenario of the changing mentality of individuals through different cultures about nature.

India is highly known for its agriculture and natural wealth. India is not a land of entrepreneurs or chief executive officers but it's a land of farmers. Since times are changing, humans too are changing with that, especially Indians. Since we are from literary field, it's more obvious and lucid to criticize and express ideas with some literary texts. It is not the business of literature to be scientific but,

in some way or other, time making us to do so. A work of literature makes its statements in its own way, which may or may not be consistent with the scientific beliefs of the day. A piece of literature may work quite successful in terms of fantasy, which has nothing at all to do with a scientific or a possible world, but which may achieve probability enough. This paper tries to do the same by achieving probability between eco-criticism, culture and psychoanalysis. Humans distancing themselves from nature in the name of civilization are clearly conveyed through the journey of certain texts from ancient literature to modern. In doing so, it also tries to analyze the different set of cultures with change of nature being treated from the past. Finally, it evaluates the epidemic rise of literary works made with the themes on modern world and technological since we are in an era that was drowned in the deluge of information with science and technology. Even though, some hyper active activities from people makes a gale of change in the field of cultural, eco criticism and psychoanalysis in recent decades as people became aware of eye-watering rise of technology at the expense of forgetting humanity, isolating from nature and changing our cultures and lifestyles in the name of civilization.

"The mind in its own place and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven..." are the words of John Milton quoted in paradise lost which is equivalent to the attitude of current generation people. Once we used to eat natural rice which doesn't contain any artificial elements in it. However, nowadays even though we know that artificial or chemical foods are not good for health still we started to accept taking them without knowing the consequence of its issues which we are facing in the present and in the future. Lot of research studies conveys that out of all personality disorder, narcissistic personality tops the list. This disorder is growing in large numbers in which a person thinks extremely highly of themselves and lacks empathy of a normal human being. The person only thinks of what they can attain from a situation which is crossing the present time without being thinking of the future. This kind of personality disorder, unfortunately, is something that has become a common phenomenon among the youth in the modern world.

The **psychoanalytic** study of certain texts from literature and few characters from real life in the present conveys the impacts and effects of how the perception of nature is getting changed in daily scenario, hunger for admiration and being without empathy and so on has been observed. The problems and impacts made by characters such as Narcissus, Dorian Gray, Evil queen and Danny

bowman, a youngster from Britain portrayed the similarities of being addicted towards narcissism and slowly distancing themselves from nature. Above that, they also demonstrated the negative side from their psyche differs with cultures and situation due to personality disorder has been analysed from literature and from current generation. The **culture** of relationship is changed drastically since some disorder being globalized. The Modern generation is brainwashed to make name for them. Contacts are made with people so that they are useful for the other person. The bonds of friendship and genuine care and concern are absent. In the past, people were obliged to be kind to and help fellow beings. This ideology is becoming less and less important now. The healthy self-love is being replaced by an unwholesome obsession with one's wants and desires. The human is becoming more and more lonely and self-absorbed. This epidemic could be carried to the generations to come.

The **Eco criticism** has been dealt and analysed through several works from literature. The way Ovid narrates his background for character getting addicted to narcissism is entirely different from Oscar Wilde or Grimm brothers are totally different from the current world. The reduction of relationship between human and nature has been magnificently portrayed in comparing these texts and it is probably due to the change in human psychology and change in culture in the name of civilization. Modern Science and technology has changed the way people looked at English language and literature. Once, people studied English language to understand and enjoy English literature. However, now people study English literature just to learn the language, the same with nature too. This new society, to fulfil its needs, requires innovativeness in every field of English literature. Of all the discipline of education, mainly in India, English literature is one of the studies makes least use of innovativeness with stagnating to its theoretical structures of the past. It is urgent need for the scholars to revive research with a typical modern approach. Ovid used water as the source of conveying his view. Then Oscar Wilde used painting by humans to convey his points in his text. Grimm brothers made use of artificial mirror to portray their ideas. However current generation used technology and social media as their mantle to convey things. Even the literary text from various generation shows that we are distancing ourselves from nature and falls deep into the idea of science and technology.

If there is one thing that most Indians take pride in, that is togetherness with a close knit society, a strongly

bonded family, so different from the "individualistic" west. India is lower than most of the former English colonies like the USA, Canada, or Australia in individualism but is higher than many of the Asian countries that are adjacent to it. Cultural Variations such as, preserving nature While the individualistic orientation of Western cultures and their researches on psychological level have made technology a predominately Western phenomenon, the transformation of the Indian and Asian selves in recent decades might have, in one way or another increased the cases of changing mindset in oriental culture. Nevertheless, even though the polarities of East and West have long begun to converge and will continue to do so, the labels "collectivism" and "individualism" still retain their validity. Moreover, each cultures still preserves its own uniqueness, with its people retaining a concept of the "self" peculiar to them.

The one among the main objective of this project is to remake literary studies with firmer scientific foundation, so that the field can generate reproducible knowledge rather than running around in theoretical circles of the past. However, we cannot survive only with science and technology without nature. Even the most practical kind of student can benefit from knowing something beyond their own professional field, and literary study provides the kind of imaginative human broadening that can prove very valuable in the long run. Even some great Scientists of the past have argued passionately for the importance of literary study in preserving the human imagination, which you can attain in a peaceful situation that can be given only by nature. Modern generation believes that English

literature and ecology does not have anything to deal with this kind of world. The truth is English literature has spoken about importance of nature and mother earth for our smooth survival even before the birth of Jesus Christ in literary texts. Life is meant to be with adaptation and adjustments but for that we cannot eat our own shit. Living for oneself is wanted thing but more than that living a life for the betterment of others is a most needed situation in present scenario. The ancestors cared so much for the nature and made plans to preserve them and ourselves from natural calamities. But we the tech humans are the main source for natural calamities and destruction.

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## GAUGING THE REALOMETER: ECOPOETICS IN GERARD MANLEY HOPKINS' POETRY

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### Abstract

*Ecopoetics seems a myth in post-modern consumerist world where values like more power and pleasure, more fame and status govern human lives. God's beautiful creation is used and misused to quench human selfishness. The humanity is disconnected with nature and finds it nearly impossible to sing the glory of the beautiful creation and establish a right relationship with Mother Nature. Gerard Manley Hopkins was blissfully sensitive to the beauty of nature. Nature gifted him a new vision of life. He experienced ecstasy in expressing his loving devotion and deep respect to Mother Earth through his poetry. He found God in everything and everything in God; so nature was sacred to Hopkins and poetry writing was a prayer. Spiritualization of the Mother Earth is the need of the hour. Everything is created by God and there is no 'higher or lower' creations that could be dominated upon. All creatures are inter-connected and inter-dependent. Progress and development at the expense of the destruction of nature for human selfishness does not help humanity in any way. It is suicidal. Hopkins' approach of the spiritualization of the whole creation could be the guidelines for the re-establishment of broken relationship between the nature and humanity.*

**Keywords:** *Interconnectedness, spiritualization, inscape, instress.*

Ecopoetics seems a myth in post-modern consumerist world where values like more power and pleasure, more fame and status govern human lives. The philosophical and spiritual values like beauty and truth, love and justice either take the back seat in life or do not feature at all. Everything is treated as a commodity and God's beautiful creation is used and misused to quench human selfishness. People forget that everything created in this world, including the human beings, is the manifestation of God's love and beauty, and all creations long to relate to each other. Humanity is disconnected with nature and finds it nearly impossible to sing the glory of the beautiful creation and establish a right relationship with Mother Nature. This leads to spiritual emptiness. The human feeling of oneness and interconnectedness with Mother Nature is a process of union with the divine. This is a dynamic process of a mystical existence in our fragmented world.

Gerard Manley Hopkins was blissfully sensitive to the beauty of nature. Mother Nature gifted him a new vision of life. He experienced ecstasy in expressing his loving devotion and deep respect to Mother Earth through his poetry. His childhood was surrounded by the natural beauty and his acquaintance with art, music and painting filled his life with aesthetic beauty. His natural genius for poetry was the result of this aesthetic existence among plants and trees, birds and animals, and art and music. When the world outside was taking pride in new scientific

discoveries, Hopkins was deeply fascinated by nature. Even as a child his observant eye and inquiring mind taught him much about the beauty of nature in the world around him. He found beauty everywhere. A little waterfall, a cloud, a sunset, a star-filled sky, all had their fascinating beauty. He had the innate longing to live and unite with the divine which he intimately, confidently and lovingly expressed through his poetry. Hopkins' desire to unite with nature in 'Heaven-Haven' is typical of the early Hopkins: "I have desired to go/Where springs not fail, /To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail/And a few lilies blow" (Hopkins 5).

Hopkins expressed his experience of nature with great care and persistence. He had drawn several trees, rocks, clouds, sky and sea-waves as a young boy. Some of these visuals appear in his poetry. "In his early poetry, Gerard was deeply influenced by the sensuousness of the young Keats" (Sebastian 179). In 'A Vision of the Mermaids', Hopkins' expressions of different colours like 'blushes', 'crimson white', 'rosy-budded fire', 'tender pinks with bloody Tyrian dye' are remarkable. Written in heroic couplet, this poem is rich in rhythm, sensuous and beautiful: "A quivering pennon; then, for eye too keen, Ebb'd back beneath its snowy lids, unseen" (Hopkins 1). Hopkins had recognized the philosophy of beauty in his adolescence. "His early sensuous poetry is imbued with the idea of Ruskinian realism in art" (Sebastian 16). Many entries about nature in his early diaries and notebooks

show that he accepted sensuous beauty as essentially good. There are several striking descriptions in 'The Escorial' that is commendable for a boy of sixteen.

Poetry, for Hopkins, was a serious spiritual matter involving the deepest level of his whole self. He wished to have a holistic understanding of nature. His love for nature was so intimate that he had already established 'I-Thou' relationship in his young age. He always respected nature and was able to converse with Mother Nature like her child as evident in 'The Habit of Perfection': "Elected Silence, sing to me, And beat upon my whorled ear" (Hopkins 5). Pre-Oxford poems are the expressions of Hopkins' adolescent imagination where Hopkins presents the world that attracts with its sensual pleasures. The effect of Greek literature is experienced in his admiration of Grecian values of beauty and imagination. He stresses on the sensuousness of beauty. He went through Victorian traumas of conscience. Hopkins' life was full of scruples. It required a constant effort to keep the senses under control to the extent of suppression of the senses. He tried to suppress his sensuousness and express the spiritual beauty of nature.

During his philosophical studies at Stonyhurst Hopkins found nature inspiring and developed his theories of 'inscape' and 'instress' to explore the manifestation of God in every living thing. According to these theories, "the recognition of an object's unique identity, which was bestowed upon that object by God, brings human beings closer to the divine" (Cafferata 3). Similarly, the beauty of the natural world and the appreciation of that beauty help human beings worship God. "Inscape also implied, in the widest sense, 'beauty' and, at another level of Hopkins' response, evidence of the divine individuality of the world as it may be experienced by humankind" (Roberts 35). Many poems, including 'Hurrahing in Harvest' and 'The Windhover,' begin with the praise of Mother Nature, which then leads into a consideration of an aspect of God. For instance, in 'The Starlight Night,' the speaker urges readers to notice the marvels of the night sky and compares the sky to a structure, which houses Christ, his mother, and the saints. "The beauty is conceived as the outer wall of heaven, a midpoint at which the world touches the periphery of Beauty, Christ" (Pick 56).

In his poems before and immediately after his ordination to priesthood, Hopkins strikes a perfect balance between the poetic art and the mystical language. "It was in a new voice altogether, distinctive in tone and timbre even to the point of occasional incomprehensibility, but undeniably the authentic voice of a human being" (Iyengar

49). He was able to incorporate the aspects of faith and beauty in his poems. He could 'find God in everything' and 'everything in God'. Seven years of poetic silence spent in prayerful reflection and contemplation of life had matured his vision of life and beauty. Poetic silence was broken with his writing of 'The Wreck of Deutschland' in 1875.

Most of the poems written after 'The Wreck of Deutschland', 'Spring', 'The Starlight Night', 'The Windhover', 'The Pied Beauty', 'Hurrahing in Harvest', and 'God's Grandeur', express joyfully the inscape of things and reveal God in nature. They are the epitome of the optimum level of poetic insights and artistic expressions. He has the sacramental view of nature that everything is sacred and beautiful. Hopkins is no longer afraid of the sense organs. "Hopkins seems to be able to fuse a Keatsian immediacy of sense perception with the spiritual tranquillity of Wordsworth and his sublime healing power" (Iyengar 89). Nature thrilled sensuous faculties of Hopkins. He abandoned himself to loneliness for a time being and experienced nature from close proximity. This filled him with the sense of mystery in nature. He exclaims in 'The Starlight Night': "Look at the stars! Look, look up at the skies! /O look at all the fire-folk sitting in the air! /The bright boroughs, the circle-citadels there! /Down in dim woods the diamond delves! The elves'-eyes!" (Hopkins 27). 'God's Grandeur' is the expression of a deep religious experience. Hopkins has the holistic vision of the whole creation. Every molecule of this universe is full of Divine power, love and beauty. 'The Starlight Night' is Hopkins' imagination of the stars as people 'sitting in the air' and enjoying celestial beauty. But celestial beauty is only the foretaste of the greater heavenly beauty that is yet to come. In 'The Caged Skylark', 'Hurrahing in Harvest', and 'The Windhover', Hopkins depicts the triangular relationship between God, nature and human beings that establishes the perfect harmony among everything. The bird has a natural life in the wilds of nature but when it is encaged the natural life of the bird is terminated. Similarly, the spirit of a human person, though caged in the prison of earthly body, longs for eternal life through union with its Creator through Mother Nature. These poems fill human beings with inner joy and transport them to ecstasy.

Hopkins drew a lot of inspiration from Mother Nature for his poetry. Hopkins's early poetry praises nature, particularly nature's unique ability to regenerate and rejuvenate. He could experience tremendous energy (*Sakti*) and its inherent power of synergy in nature. He could feel motherly love and care in nature (feminization). The unique ability to regenerate life could be seen in his

later poetry too when he went through desolation especially in Ireland where he felt lonely and inefficient. In 'Moonrise' Hopkins expresses how nature was a major source of inspiration and hope that helped him to drag ahead his life: "This was the prized, the desirable sight, /Unsought, presented so easily, /Parted me leaf and leaf, divided me, /Eyelid and eyelid of slumber" (Hopkins 69). He, not only vividly described Mother Nature but also, beautifully establishes a link between human indifference to environmental degradation and spiritual crisis of the Victorian era. Throughout his travels in England and Ireland, Hopkins witnessed the detrimental effects of industrialization on the environment, including pollution, urbanization, and diminished rural landscapes. While he lamented these effects, he also believed in nature's power of regeneration. In 'God's Grandeur,' the speaker notes the wellspring that runs through nature and through humans: "And for all this, nature is never spent; /There lives the dearest freshness deep down things" (Hopkins 27).

While Hopkins never doubted the presence of God in nature, he became increasingly depressed by late nineteenth-century life and began to doubt nature's ability to withstand human destruction. His 'terrible sonnets' focus on images of death, including the vultures picking at prey. Rather than depict the glory of nature's rebirth, these poems depict the deaths that must occur in order for the cycle of nature to continue. Hopkins had deep faith in Mother Nature and the presence of natural beauty all around him inspired and encouraged him to live his life more meaningfully. Some of his 'terrible sonnets' manifest his experience of nature's consoling and guiding presence in his crisis ridden life. Hopkins' 'sacramental view' of nature includes both natural and supernatural aspects of creation. In his mature years, nature had become more significant. He could see God's revelation through nature. All creation has the purpose of glorifying God. A tree gives glory to God by being a tree. A person gives glory to God by being a person. Every essence gives the utmost reverence and glory to God.

Human experience of the divine comes through the natural world. There is constant communication. A rock can teach a lesson to human beings. For Hopkins, especially after his ordination as a Jesuit priest, mysticism was not merely an intellectual concept. Hopkins wrote poetry of praise like 'God's Grandeur' to express the power, justice and mercy of God and constant human dependence on God: "The world is charged with the grandeur of God. It will flame out, like shining from shook foil" (Hopkins 27).

Hopkins had developed his own ecosophy. He had established an integral ecology. It had become a daily practice of compassion, cooperation and reverence for all creation that release the spirit of brotherhood. The sacramental quality is present in much of Hopkins' poetry in which sensuous appeal of nature's beauty becomes the starting point for him to look deeper into her being and to realize and feel her 'inscape' and 'instress'. Everything is connected to everything else. 'Laudato Si', the Papal encyclical on ecology, re-emphasizes this integral ecology. This sublime communion fills human beings with a sacred, affectionate and humble respect for Mother Nature. His intimacy with nature filled him with the feeling of being loved by nature. He spent a lot of time contemplating the natural beauty. He always looked at nature with the child-like innocence. He could always find and feel something new in the things of the world. His was a joyous vision of the world in which all things are seen to be good and beautiful. Hopkins, being more than an observer of nature, a mystic, is able to make others see and appreciate the beauty and presence of God in everything we see and feel. His poetry is the outward signs of the inward grace he experienced in every stage of his life. On the one hand Hopkins looked at nature with wonder and awe; on the other hand he was so familiar and comfortable with Mother Nature that he loved being surrounded by nature. He found beauty everywhere. He spent a lot of time in just blissfully gazing at natural beauty. Sometimes, he entered into a trance-like experience looking at nature and expressing her beauty in verses. Mere gaze at the beauty of nature gave him a mystical feeling of union with nature. Hopkins always felt one with Mother Nature. He was deeply interconnected with Mother Nature. He used adolescent imagination for his early poetic expressions. The sensuous beauty of nature was, in fact, the starting point for a deeper prayerful reflection on God's ever presence in everything. He developed a sacramental view of nature where everything was sacred and beautiful. His 'bright sonnets' are the expressions of this mystical beauty of God's creation. He presents God's mystical presence in everything and everything in God.

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## MERGING ECOLOGY AND GENDER PREDICAMENTS: AN ECOFEMINIST READING OF MARGARET ATWOOD'S *SURFACING*

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### Abstract

*One of the burning concerns that humanity faces today is the environmental degradation and its subsequent ecological havoc. Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the environment. Ecological criticism highlights the fact that the human culture is connected to the physical world and vice versa. Ecofeminism is an offshoot of Ecocriticism and it has become an indispensable subject in both ecological and gender studies. This paper aims at studying Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing* from an ecofeminist point of view. This text illustrates the oppression of both environment and women by the power structure of the patriarchal system. The nameless protagonist in the novel understands the gulf between her natural self and artificiality of her bygone days as she encounters with nature. This novel discusses the issues related to feminism and environmentalism that convey the traits of ecological feminism.*

**Keywords:** Ecological havoc, Ecofeminism, oppression, domination, environmentalism.

The degradation of the environment and climate change are adversely affecting human existence. Environmental degradation and its subsequent impact on climate is one of the leading discourses in present era of globalisation. Literature as a mirror of society reflects its repercussion on the physical environment and human lives. Margaret Atwood touches upon issues of environment and women in many of her novels. The concept of Ecofeminism emerged from the assumption that both environment and women are the victims thanks to the domination of patriarchal society which exploits and subjugates both environment and women. According to Sherilyn MacGregor, Ecofeminism addresses the following questions: "Are women more "naturally" connected to nature than men? Do women's gendered roles and experiences give them unique insight into human-nature relationships? Why is it that women around the world seem to demonstrate relatively more concern for the quality of their environments than men?" (Qtd in Niamh Moore 61). Eco feminism often tends to address these questions. Vandana Shiva pointed out the politics of eco feminisms. According to her

Ecofeminism is the only political framework I know of that can spell out the historical links between neoliberal capital, militarism, corporate science, worker alienation, domestic violence, reproductive technologies, sex tourism, child molestation, neo-colonialism, Islamophobia, extra activism, nuclear weapons, industrial toxics, land and water grabs, deforestation, genetic engineering, climate change and the myth of modern progress. Ecofeminist

solutions are also synergistic; the organization of daily life around subsistence fosters food sovereignty, participatory democracy and reciprocity with natural ecosystems. (Vandana Shiva ix)

The narrator in the novel returns to Northern Quebec, an underdeveloped Island, where she is in search of her missing father. The protagonist in the novel sets out on a journey with her three friends, Anna, Joe and David. (Joe is the boyfriend of protagonist and Anna and David are married couple). Her quest for self is exemplified in her search for her missing father. That is clear as she completely moves to the mystic feeling of nature. She also talks about her erstwhile life before she comes closer to nature. Her experiences with ex-husband and her abortion attempt show the powerlessness of her inner self when she was closely associated with the society. She embraced nature as her remedy for her mental relaxation although at the end of the novel she pronounced her readiness to conceive again to be part of society. She realised the artificiality of materialistic world only when she encounters with nature. She realised that both nature and women are victims due to the Phallogocentric and Eurocentric colonialism that hold strong masculine point of view. Men damage natural heritage. She laments, "the trees are killed as soon as they are valuable, big trees are scarce like whales" (40). The narrator seems to hurt whenever she happens to see the destructive activities done on nature.

J. Brooks Bouson suggests that when the *Surfacer* ... becomes transformed into the 'natural woman,' she both

rebels against the masculinist mindset that maps and delimits the world and enacts her secret desire to escape from the contained, domestic sphere of femininity. But although she escapes masculine logic and domestic confinement in her merger with nature, and although the text insistently privileges nature over civilization, the Surfacers' transformation into the 'natural woman' is still unsettling. (Qtd in Macpherson 34)

Anna is another female character in the novel, is also a victim of male chauvinism. David's ways of deportment in the novel exhibits that he belittles Anna and does not respect her. His underestimation of her intellectuality is clear in the novel. The protagonist narrates:

What would we talk about? She is too dumb, she can't figure out what I'm saying to her, Jesus, she moves her lips when she watches T.V. even. She does not know any thin, every time she opens her mouth she makes as ass of herself. I know what you are thinking... I am all for the equality of women; she just does not happen to be equal and that's not my fault, is it? (Atwood 138)

Her transformation into true nature exemplifies the traits of Ecofeminism. She no longer wants to be identified with her erstwhile materialistic life. She can't cope up with a society where her choices and wishes are culturally and socially constructed. Her identification with nature is manifested as she explains

White stems curved like question marks, fish coloured in the dim light, corpse plants, inedible. Finger-shaped yellow fungi, unclassified, invert memorised all of them; Death Angel, deadly poison. Beneath it the invisible part, threadlike underground network of which this was the solid flow, temporary as an icicle, growth frozen; tomorrow it would be melted but the root would stay. If our bodies lived in the earth with only the hair sprouting up through the leaf mould it would seem as if that was there, filament plats (Atwood 150)

She is critical of American colonialism and their plan on the Island. David in the novel talks about how American colonialism led to the destruction of flora and fauna of the Island. He asserts that "this country is founded on the bodies of dead animals? Dead fish, dead seals, the beaver is to this country what the black man is to the United State. Not only that, in New York it is now a dirty word, beaver. I think that's very significant" (Atwood 40). The killing of Heron, the dead bird by coloniser in the novel also symbolically embodies masculine power and superiority over women and environment. The protagonist firmly believes that all creatures on earth are sacred and animals are killed or haunted because they have some divine power as Jesus. Her juxtaposition of human activity on

environment and animal with Jesus manifests her inner concern over the eradication of animals and forest for the sake human's comfortable life. She points out that:

The animals die that we may live, they are substitute people, hunters in the fall killing the dear that is Christ also. And we eat them, out of cans or otherwise; we are eaters of death, dead Christ flesh resurrecting inside us, granting us life. Canned Spam canned Jesus, even the plants must be Christ. But we refuse to worship; the body worship with blood and muscle but the thing in the knob head will not, will not to, the head if greedy, it consumes but does not give thanks (Atwood 14).

The novel also touches upon the question of women's traditional social and sexual role. It talks about the health risks concept of contraception as a male invention, the rule of inherent in pregnancy, the idea of marriage, etc. Her journey through Canadian wilderness is an effort to find out her true self and also to free from the yoke of society and patriarchal domination. As she stands closer to nature, her body gets transferred into plants, animals and she feels that she has become part of her sacred mother earth. Where she is empathetic with the creatures on earth she says "A mosquito bites on my arm I let it bite me... they need blood before they can lay eggs" (67). Atwood's *Surfacing* is an exploration of the themes of ecological havoc and gender concerns. The novel's environmental concerns are inextricably linked with its theme of gender issues. The novel clearly manifests that women are more inclined towards the environment and its creatures. The protagonist in the novel is more empathetic with the animal creatures on earth and she lashes out the destructive activities by American colonial power that led to the destruction of flora and fauna on the island. The predicaments of women in the novel merge with environmental concerns of the protagonist. Her journey through the forest teaches her many lessons and that brought her closer to environment.

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## ECOCONSCIOUSNESS IN THE POETRY OF ST. LOUIS DE MONTFORT

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### Abstract

*This paper attempts to study select poems of the eighteenth century Christian mystic and saint St. Louis De Montfort from an ecotheological perspective. Eco theology as a discipline recognises the inter-relationship between God, human society and its biological and physical environment. It gives great importance to the individuality that creates separate existences for each person as well as each object that recognise every entity as unique, because we do not own the earth, or anything in it. An ecotheological approach to literature would read literary texts combining aspects of literary studies and ecotheology. Three poems of St. Louis De Montfort namely, "On Solitude", "Resolutions of a converted Sinner during the Mission", "Poor in Spirit" will be studied from specifically Christian ecotheological perspective. The paper will also study how, being an ecosaint he not only speaks about God and Nature, but formulate ways to reach God through Nature.*

**Keywords:** St. Montfort, ecotheology, ecosaint, Nature, Inter-relationship.

In the history of Christianity, St. Francis of Assisi stands unique as a prime example of a nature mystic in the thirteenth century. He took spontaneous joy in the material world and felt himself a part of the family of creation. Following his foot prints, the eighteenth century poet St. Louis de Montfort, one of the last representatives of the peak of French mysticism had also expressed in the work *God alone II : The Hymns of St. Louis Marie de Montfort* his special talent to meditate on God's creatures and deepen his feeling for them. Till now, numerous studies have dealt with various aspects of Montfort's spirituality, but to date there has not been an in-depth analysis of Montfort as an ecosaint. In this focus lies the originality of the present paper. The eco-mystical experience articulated in the three poems of St. Louis De Montfort namely, "On Solitude", "Resolutions of a converted Sinner during the Mission", "Poor in Spirit" that appreciate and proclaim Creation as God's handiwork is analysed in the frame work of ecotheology with special reference to the Bible and Christian traditional beliefs that formulate ways to reach God through Nature.

It is true that Christians consider themselves as pilgrims passing through this world; they often tend to, as a corollary, see the material world as the hindrance to their spiritual life. Most Fathers of the Church and saints did advocated a Christian spirituality that was nurtured away from an active involvement in a worldly life. As William James, in *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, notes that the foundation of Christian mystical practice is "the mind's detachment from outer sensations, for these

interferes with its concentration upon ideal things" (352). But we can also find Christian saints who had a practical and healthy relationship with the natural world, a relationship that they nurtured through contemplation of creation as did St. Francis of Assisi, St. Bonaventure, St. Louise Marie de Montfort etc. These saints turned outward through their senses to physical world and experienced God's presence in creation. Sr. Ancil in "Eco-spirituality: Catholic Perspectives" states: "It is noticeable that Christian contemplatives have often been found religious inspiration in the beauty of the world, around them. The art of prayerful contemplation of the 'book of creation' continued to be practiced throughout subsequent centuries" (110). Creation as book and source of inspiration for their enlightenment and solitude is realised by St. Louis De Montfort also.

During the last few decades of the twentieth century, there emerged a body of literature that was ecologically grounded, environmentally aware of God's presence, and respects and loves universe for its own sake. This body of writing has come to be called Eco-Theology or Ecological Theology. It recognises the inter-relationship between God, human society and its biological and physical environment. It acknowledges the destructive impact which human society is having on the environment. It makes one aware of the moral responsibility which human societies have towards the environment. It gives great importance to the individuality that creates separate existences for each person as well as each object and recognises every entity as unique. Above all we need an ecological consciousness

which see everything as God's gift and make sure that nothing of His creation shall be misused or exploited (Ancil 107-123). Montfort's selected poems are analysed in the above mentioned criteria.

The poem, "On Solitude" contains thirty seven stanzas, in which the repetition of the line "Far from the world, at this hermitage, / Let's go into hiding to serve God" gets prominence" (614). 'The world' here doesn't imply the surrounding or external natural world but the world polluted with noise and chemicals, it can be taken to refer to the world which humans have made unworthy to live peacefully in communion with nature and God, which distracts solitude of mind and soul. By differentiating the world that felt evidence of the destructive impact of our presence St. Montfort acknowledges the critical impact which human society is having on the environment.

Montfort moves on to give credit to the God the Creator whose handiwork maintains everything. Eco theology/ ecological consciousness sees everything as God's gift and makes sure that nothing of His creation shall be misused or exploited. Montfort says that "everything thrives without any labourer's work./ By the hand of God this land is virgin and fertile". "The Creator's mighty hand /which formed this universe, / shines in these remote sites/ of innocent nature" (615). The Psalmist also a similar view, "The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork" (Ps.19:1-2).

In the place that Montfort describes in the poem, there was no other disturbance of noise, "no sound /of squabbles among neighbours, / no chatting among the worldly, / no battles or shipwrecks." "These glories of nature / have God for their creator. Never has sinful man/ laid his criminal hands." The countryside holds none of those dangers. The woods and the rocks are the holy, wise masters. The rocks preach fidelity, the woods, fruitfulness, the streams, purity, all things, love and obedience. "The groves ring with sweet harmony/ of the birds and the echoes, / the cries of animals; / not those of ungodly men, / the eloquent silence/ of rocks and forests/ only preach peace, / breathe only innocence." (615- 616). In the book *St. Francis of Assisi*, the memorable sermon to the birds highlights the bond between God-men-creatures: "My little sisters, the birds, many are the bonds that unite us to God...Praise Him . . . He provides you without your working for it, for the songs He has taught you...God sustains you without having to sow or reap...He gives you fountain and streams to drink from.." (Fortini 519). In the prayer song of St. Francis, known as "the Canticle of Brother sun" (113-114) which is a wonderful and ever

timely work, he praises God for each and every creatures, for elements of the earth, like Brother Sun, Sister Moon and the Stars, Brother Wind and Air, fair and stormy, all weather's moods, Sister Water, Brother Fire, Sister Earth, Sister Death etc. According to Pope Benedict XVI this *Canticle* invites to recognize nature as a stupendous book that speaks to us of God, of his beauty and of his goodness (85).

The Psalmist solidifies the understanding of the glory and uniqueness expressed in all creation, "You made springs flow into channels that wind among the mountains" (Ps. 104:10) In the same way each verse of Montfort's poem paints a picture of description of the beauty of the place in the remaining stanzas, "In the summer, its chill is pleasant", "In winter, at the top, one finds a nice flow of air from the south". "Meadows and streams, charming the view and also one's troubles. /At the bottom flows a river, The Kedron stream, abundant in fish, delightful in every way./ It extends its clear waters over flourishing fields and then exuberantly rushes between the hills/ On the sides, three clear springs, where the never failing water gushes from above and below, watering the plains." He adds that a place filled with more grace is the "deserted place, a league or more of woods, luxuriant shrubbery, rocks, hidden streams, the hermitage, a deep cave in a rock"(614-619) in which the God's presence can be felt and the nature's inert worth is realised.

Eco-theology invites us to see nature as a magnificent book in which God speaks to us and grants us a glimpse of his infinite beauty and goodness. Rather than a problem to be solved, the world is a joyful mystery to be contemplated with gladness and praise. Hence, in the message given by Pope Francis for "World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation" teaches that, "to commit a crime against the natural world is a sin against ourselves and a sin against God" (2)

A mystical experience which is inspired by beauty and worth of creation like a landscape, the stars at night, waterfalls or specifically a flower, acts as a catalyst to the personal reaction of wonder which unite one's mind and soul in union with God. St. Montfort says in the poem, "Fools cannot understand this. The desert would be their torture" (615). For the people who are immersed in the worldly pleasures and attracted towards the consumerist world the place of natural beauty, the place of silence will be a torture. They don't have an ability to recognise its worth. But "Solitude is the great school where the saints were formed, where their hearts all afire, received the gift of the word" (614-619).

In *Mysticism and Religious Traditions* by Katz, nature mysticism is defined as, "our union with nature becomes a mode of God's communication of himself to us through his creation and of our union with him by perceiving his presence in the physical world. (Cousins 167-168). This poem describes the natural world's inherent worth, its ability to communicate, it is very clear that nature has its own language to communicate and share. But it can be understood only by a person who has tuned himself with this rhythmic natural world. The Psalmist, acting as a mediator also had a similar view in the observation of the communication of the natural world. He says: "There is no speech, nor are these words; their voice is not heard; yet their voice goes out through all the earth and their words to the end of the world (Ps 19:1-4). Sometimes according to the poem, Nature is "shelter from the tempest, / a perfect resting place/ a dwelling so attractive/ every day is a feast." It is also the place where "God ...speak to his heart,/praying continually/ tasting profound peace...to fill yourself with God/ and His words of life" "Dead to all, hidden within, / distracted by nothing/ possessing the true Good/ we contemplate Supreme beauty" (618).

In "Resolutions of a converted sinner during the mission" we again come across the differentiation between two kinds of world, one world which the speaker is trying to get rid of by telling "Farewell world/ Farewell pleasures/ farewell fame/ farewell earthly things/ let the world pass by/ let us leave the world / Farewell world and its abuses etc." (572-573). And another world which he prefers, he says in the lines, "I prefer the song of the birds/ And all the cries of the animals to the worldly new tunes". "I will seek the woods or a hole in the rock. Here are woods and hills, a spring and brooks, a thatched cottage and hamlets." What mysterious contentment, Oh! What -sweet and holy peace/ my heart tastes in these forests!" (575). In Biblical verses we come across the differentiation between these two different worlds. One of these, which Jesus calls evil, is where the temptation from evil is expected. There were many situations in which Jesus prayed for His people to be saved from this world. The other one is the natural world from which Jesus cites day to day examples in his preaching, his whole life he was a wanderer who experienced unity with God through the natural world.

In the other poem "Poor in Spirit" the next aspect of an eco-saint to have simple life style is highlighted. Ecosaints were determined to express their faith and love of God through simplicity of life and self-denial. This self-denial of material goods brought them in close contact with the natural world and heightened their appreciation of its

wonders and beauty. In other words their asceticism was an identification of the love of the Creator and all creatures. In the poem "Poor in Spirit", these lines substantiate simplicity: "When I go forth through the fields / My walking-stick in hand/ no shoes, no baggage, no care/ I stride with great pomp/ Like a king in his court./In God, I feel like a lord,/ The universe is mine"/ I flit from branch to branch/ Like a small bird, / My heart is never heavy,/ for no burden I carry./ No violence,/ no bother to anyone,/ I use with all innocence/ whatever freely is given" (584-585). These lines show clearly the relation between the simplicity of life and nature lover. The poet asserts that he will not be greedy to accumulate the wealth of this beautiful world for his /her own sake and exploit it to such an extent. He trusts in Divine providence and as the poetic line says "In God, I feel like a lord, / the universe is mine" (585). Since the person who is connected to this natural world knows that his Creator was the maker of this Universe also and so God, Abba Father becomes his provider and he feels that as sons and daughters of Father, everything is his too. There is no need to exploit it or misuse it. The interconnectedness in this world web is experienced by an ecosaint.

Montfort also has a critical mind. Getting his inspiration from the Bible and Christian tradition, he writes about faith and spirituality in his verse. "If someone wants to follow me/ Most welcome is he! / But he must agree to live like me, / No belongings, no income; / let him follow me without show! So let us sing merrily" (586). It parallels the sayings of Jesus in Mathew, chapter 16, verse 24, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. Self-denial that is shedding 'ego' and becoming 'eco'-friendly is very essential element to be a true spiritual person. For such a person this natural world is his home and he feels a sense of union with each and every creature and standing on this earth he is capable of raising his mind and soul to Abba the God father. Theologian David Toolan, S.J. calls this felt-sense of belonging to the infinite a "cosmic embrace" (Abbott Web).

Weil Logister in *The Charity of God Makes Me Sing* comments thus on St. Montfort: 'He fits in the traditional conviction also shared by a Christian saint as Francis, who experiences in nature the manifestation of the divine presence in the world and therefore sees nature as the book that is the counterpart of the Bible.' Neither in Francis nor in Montfort this leads to sentimental romanticism because disaster in the world hurts them too much" (53). According to Montfort, we are surrounded by a divine

stream of goodness and empathy that is in, above, around and amongst us. So contemplation on this natural world will provide us an ability to lift us up above our ego-centrism to eco-centrism. To love God is to love everything and everyone in the spirit of God, without excluding anyone, or anything and not treating them as second rate, and not feeling ourselves superior, nor making someone think he /she/ it means nothing.

Ecological Theology gives great importance to the individuality that creates separate existences for each person as well as each object and recognises every entity as unique.

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## H.G.WELLS: EARTH IN SCIENCE FICTION

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### Abstract

*Science Fiction is a type of theoretical fiction, regularly managing inventive ideas like time travel, parallel universes and extraterrestrial life. Science fiction frequently investigates the potential outcomes of logical and different developments, and has been known as a "writing of thoughts or literature of ideas". Wells is now best remembered for his sci-fi books and is known as a "father of science-fiction". This paper deals with Earth in H.G.Wells' science fiction. The most claimed works of H.G.Wells like 'The Time Machine' and 'The War of the Worlds' were taken as examples to discuss Earth in his works. The concepts like the Dying Earth subgenre and Eschatology are observed from 'The Time Machine' and 'The War of the Worlds' being the invasion literature of the time showed the conflict between mankind and an extraterrestrial race.*

Dying Earth is a subgenre of science fantasy which happens in the far future at either the finish of life on Earth or the End of Time, when the laws of the universe themselves come up short. Themes of world-weariness, innocence (wounded or otherwise), idealism, entropy, (permanent) exhaustion/depletion of many or all resources (such as soil nutrients), and the expectation of reestablishment have a tendency to dominate. A portion of the cases for this sort of sub-type are Jean-Baptiste Cousin de Grainville's *Le Dernier Homme* (1805) portrays the story of Omegarus, the Last Man on Earth. It is a hopeless vision without bounds when the Earth has turned out to be absolutely sterile. Lord Byron's ballad "Murkiness" (1816) indicates Earth after the Sun has died. In "The Time Machine," Wells demonstrates first how far human advancement will go if capitalism continues unhampered: humankind will part into two distinct species, the ruling class (the Eloi in the novel) and the common laborers (the Morlocks). Besides, the progressions of human advancement won't really propel the species - a remarkable inverse, indeed. Their extravagant, joyful human progress has made the lovely Eloi the powerless, apathetic, and inept focuses of the Morlocks; without a dire need to survive, the Eloi have not expected to wind up noticeably more "fit", but rather have relapsed. In this way, despite the fact that man may develop to adjust to his condition, the changing condition itself may make that advancement eventually bothersome. Social Darwinism does not consider, and Wells' depiction of the Eloi serves as an unfavorable cautioning to the ruling class who trusts it is endeavoring toward flawlessness.

To counter the perception of evolution as excellence, Wells brings in the concept of entropy (from the Second

Law of Thermodynamics). The principle of entropy states that systems tend toward disorder and loss of energy over time. The Eloi seem to embody the effects of entropy; they are lazy, have little physical strength, and grow chaotically fearful when the Morlocks are near. But Wells truly shows his hand in Chapter XI, when the Time Traveler jumps thirty million years into the future and witnesses the universe's gradual dissipation of energy; the concept of the dying Earth is observed.

The War of the Worlds concentrates on the intrusion of the British field by outsiders from Mars. It is described by an obscure hero, who looks for security amidst the tenacious decimation caused by the Martians. It is composed as a true record. No principle characters are named, and the vast majority of the novel concentrates on events. Wells' work every now and again centered around making logical ideas available to the British people. In 1894, a stargazer suspected that he had seen lights on the surface of Mars that demonstrated life on the planet. This roused Wells to compose the book. The novel was distributed after an exposition about existence on Mars was distributed by Wells in 1896. A less pervasive motivation for the novel was the unification of Germany. This prompted various novel being distributed portraying the intrusion of Britain by a remote power. These were composed in a truthful way, which likely enlivened Wells' the point at which he was composing. The War of the Worlds has been adapted quite frequently. The most popular is likely the 1938 radio communicate, which was described by performer Orson Welles. It is so well known in light of the fact that it motivated mass frenzy and mania. Audience members didn't understand that it was a play, and imagined that outsiders were really attacking.

In the novel the contention amongst humankind and the Martians is depicted as a survival of the fittest, with the Martians whose more drawn out time of fruitful development on the more seasoned Mars has prompted them building up a prevalent insight, ready to make weapons far ahead of time of people on the more youthful planet Earth, who have not had the chance to create adequate knowledge to build comparable weapons. The novel likewise proposes a potential future for human development and maybe a notice against exaggerating insight against more human qualities. The Narrator depicts the Martians as having developed an overdeveloped mind, which has abandoned them with lumbering bodies, with expanded knowledge, yet a lessened capacity to utilize their feelings, something Wells ascribes to substantial capacity.

Wells had just proposed another result for the outsider intrusion story in *The War of the Worlds*. At the point when the Narrator meets the artilleryman the second time, the artilleryman envisions a future where humankind, concealing underground in sewers and passages, directs a guerrilla war, battling against the Martians for ages to come, and in the long run, subsequent to figuring out how to copy Martian weapon innovation, demolishes the intruders and reclaims the Earth.

In times when humanity was slightest mindful of things identified with the additional earthbound life, Wells has taken a jump in acquainting the obscure sci-fi with the world; delineating the nonexistent eventual fate of Earth, its climatic conditions, and through his works individuals wound up noticeably mindful of new sort of dangers to Earth and its reality.

In a scene from his *Time Machine*, The Morlocks open the Sphinx and use the time machine as bait to capture the Traveller, not understanding that he will use it to escape. He reattaches the levers before he travels

further ahead to roughly 30 million years from his own time. There he sees some of the last living things on a dying Earth: menacing reddish crab-like creatures slowly wandering the blood-red beaches chasing enormous butterflies in a world covered in simple lichenous vegetation. He continues to make short jumps through time, seeing Earth's rotation gradually cease and the sun grow larger, redder, and dimmer, and the world falling silent and freezing as the last degenerate living things die out. He finds himself in the distant future of an unrecognisable Earth, populated with furry, hopping herbivores resembling kangaroos. He stuns or kills one with a rock, and upon closer examination realises they are probably the descendants of humans/Eloi/Morlocks.

The output of H.G. Wells' ceaselessly probing mind has been reflected in modern technological wonders like space technologies, Earth and her neighbourhood, mass transit, futuristic weapons, fringe science and nuclear chain reactions. Starting from the primitives of Earth and mankind, H.G.Wells' greatest contributions to the future were his efforts to educate and to generate excitement about the possibilities of the world to come.

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## ECO-SENSITIVITY THROUGH ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING

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### Abstract

*We as teachers of the 21st century believe that education is one of the greatest changing forces of the century. In this regard, our primary goal is to help our students and teachers achieve personal success to become better citizens of the 21st century. How do we experience the excitement and joy of learning? The only possible answer to this question is maybe that as English language teachers, along with our students should experience the excitement and joy of learning, by bringing the classroom to life. Students learn or become familiar about the world around them by experiencing it through National Geographic Learning. Real life stories from the National Geographic channel will enable students to become highly motivated and as engaged learners will be successful inside and outside the classroom. Reading and learning through National Geographic Videos inspires a generation of informed decision-makers. It helps learners develop the ability to think critically and communicate effectively in the global world. Our mission is to inspire students to learn and acquire the skills they need to be successful in their careers or educational experiences, as well as to become lifelong caretakers of the planet.*

**Keywords:** National Geographic, words and pictures, life, planet, students, Earth, caretakers, eco-sense

### Bringing the World into the Classroom

We as teachers of the 21<sup>st</sup> century believe that education is one of the greatest changing forces of the century. In this regard, our primary goal is to help our students and teachers achieve personal success to become better citizens of the 21st century. How do we experience the excitement and joy of learning? The only possible answer to this question is maybe that as English language teachers, along with our students should experience the excitement and joy of learning, by bringing the classroom to life. Our task is to inspire students to learn and acquire the skills they need to be successful in their careers or educational experiences, as well as to become lifelong caretakers of the planet.

Students learn or become familiar about the world around them by experiencing it through *National Geographic Learning*. Real life stories from the National Geographic channel will enable students to become highly motivated and as engaged learners will be successful inside and outside the classroom. These kinds of tasks may also increase learners' knowledge of the world and bring about an eco sense in everything they do.

The National Geographic Channel is presented to us as NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC LEARNING which brings the planet earth into your classroom through a journeying of real world content in the form of striking images, text, and videos. Students can also strengthen their existing universal connections and skills needed for communication in the 21st century.

### Words and Pictures

The book titled National Geographic Learning gives us innovative texts which teachers can use as resources inside the classroom. They might have a broad appeal, as they are neither too specialised nor too shallow or generic. When students read these texts, the standard is clear because they are reliable and have a clear sense of who the reader is.

Being authentic texts, they are packed out with contextualised examples of the kind of language – both lexis and structure – we need to present to learners. Equally, teachers can download a wide range of text types available on the internet from [www.ngl.life.com/content/sample-units](http://www.ngl.life.com/content/sample-units). Some examples would be short news items to long personal essays; from explanations of diagrams and processes to expedition blogs; from interviews to reportage. The language is also quite simple wherein the students will be able to generate new simplified or parallel texts of their own.

This makes the teacher's job easier and more interesting as there is plenty of live and authentic content available to exploit to the maximum. This comes in the form of comprehension tasks, the students' personal responses to the texts and productive spoken or written tasks. The teacher finds it a lot better to help the student gain knowledge and understanding through the various stages towards their own productive output in the learning cycle. Equal weightage is given to the units within the lessons along with the factual or informational context of the articles as much as the language development work.

These are two sides of the same coin: when we have information we want to do something with it – either process it and share it or simply store it for future reference. And the students are, after all, learning the language in order to communicate effectively, to convey information, whether that is factual or affective in nature. So these content-rich *National Geographic* texts allow us as language teachers to build the learning cycle based on receiving, processing, transforming and transmitting the 'data'.

### What is bringing the classroom to life?

National Geographic videos, graphics and photographs illustrate the theory of 'terra-forming' Mars – how to transform the surface of Mars into a human-friendly place. The graphic video on terraforming gives us the story quite clearly, and the short captions introduce the language that we have to use in the process. Teachers and students may find this kind of activity cognitively demanding but this can lead to personalised discussions of what 'a new Life' might consist of. This is what the *National Geographic* text gives us as language teachers who want to be eco-sensitive, and who also will, in turn, use the opportunity to bring together a series of contrasting, thought-provoking and mind-boggling articles and texts, which we hope will really engage students and help them lead a meaningful dialogue in the classroom.

### Sample Unit

#### Terraforming: Making Mars More Like Earth

##### Pre-task

1. What kind of systems are needed to support life on Earth?
2. How do they work together to support life?
3. Describe the conditions that would allow life to exist on other planets?
4. Bring out a short comparison on the environments of Earth and Mars.
5. Do you think the environmental conditions on Mars have to change in order to support human life?
6. Define terraforming. How does it work on a planet like Mars?
7. Who has the right to terraform Mars?
8. List out a few challenges associated with terraforming Mars?
9. Should Mars be terraformed?
10. What is the role of ethics in space exploration?

Once students have been able to answer all these questions associated with terraforming and its issues, they will be able to move to the next part of the lesson.

Part 2 is designed to help students combine the information they have gathered over the course of the first two activities and they begin to think collectively about the challenges and concerns of various countries involved in a Mars terraforming mission. They can be divided into groups and asked to research, discuss and present various issues or challenges that might be involved in terraforming efforts in order to eventually determine if the process might be worth considering. They can also be given the opportunity to consider environmental, political, social, economic, and technological issues that could help or hinder an initiative of this nature.

### Duration of Lesson

Two to four one-hour periods, depending on how much class time is available for student research.

### Assessment

Class presentations, Group research project and writing essays.

The teacher can ask students to read the article Footprint Basics before beginning this lesson, as a homework assignment. They can also be given the website([http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/footprint\\_basics\\_overview/](http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/footprint_basics_overview/)) on the Global Footprint Network website.

To be prepared for Part 3, students should be able to (a) describe the concept of an Ecological Footprint and (b) explain the types of information taken into account as part of the Ecological Footprint calculation. 2. Students should calculate their own Ecological Footprint (<http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/calculators/>) independently. They should bring a copy of their results (final data page) to class on the day Part 3 is scheduled to begin.

### Tasks for the Intermediate Level Learners

#### Life in colour

##### Reading

Read the article and find the following information. three ways we use colour one example of each way we use colour 3 Work in pairs. Compare your answers with another pair of students. Then come up with more examples for three uses of colour from your own culture.

## Reading Passage

([http://www.ngllife.com/sites/default/files/Intermediate\\_Unit\\_1.pdf](http://www.ngllife.com/sites/default/files/Intermediate_Unit_1.pdf)) We live our lives in colour from our earliest days – in Western cultures ‘pink for a girl’ or ‘blue for a boy’. Colour plays a big part in everything we do. We use it both as a badge of identity and a way of expressing our individuality through decoration. And we use different colours to send out very different messages.

## Identity

People need a sense of group identity. Look at the schoolboy in the photo. From his colourful traditional dress, other people in Peru know he comes from the Quechua community. We wear uniforms at school and work, and we dress in our favourite sports team colours to say the same thing – we belong to this group.

## Decoration

The Huli villager in the photo is getting ready for a local festival. He’s applying the traditional colours of red, black and white in his own personal pattern. Face-painting is an important part of the celebrations, and these days people are starting to experiment with brightly coloured synthetic paints as well as traditional hues. In fashion-conscious Europe, the ‘in’ colour changes every season. This autumn, for example, women are wearing shades of purple and lilac.

## Messages

Marketing experts understand the power of colour very well. Packaging and labels in eye-catching colours stand out on the supermarket shelf. And companies always select the colour of their brand very carefully – a calm blue for a bank you can trust, dark green says quality and sophistication, or brown and green means eco-friendliness.

## Speaking

Classify the activities listed below into two groups: routine activities and leisure activities.

- a. cook a meal
- b. decorate your house
- c. doing housework
- d. dress up
- e. browsing the internet
- f. going out with friends
- g. go shopping
- h. go to evening classes
- i. go to an exercise class

- j. learning a new skill
- k. make something with your hands
- l. reading a new book
- m. spending time with your family

## Vocabulary

### Feelings and personal states

#### Work in groups.

1. Which colours do you associate with love and anger?
2. Choose the correct word for each definition. Check that you understand the meaning of the other words. Use a dictionary if necessary.
3. passion / prosperity financial success
4. love / luck when things go well without planning them
5. courage / anger the ability to face dangerous situations without being afraid
6. happiness / wisdom the ability to make good decisions based on experience
7. knowledge / sorrow information and facts that a person has
8. power / sadness a feeling of being unhappy
9. Sample Videos as resources for teachers to follow in the classroom.
10. <https://youtu.be/mlrhVPdQuu0>
11. <https://youtu.be/oMDRfAm2MZg>
12. <https://youtu.be/7GE3uqsB38Q>

## Sample Units for Student Activities

### Interactive Reading Practice

**Students can read a text, do an interactive activity online, or listen to the audio and explore online.**

<http://www.ngllife.com/student-zone/interactive-reading-practice>

### Monolingual and multilingual word lists

<http://www.ngllife.com/student-zone-monolingual-and-multilingual-word-li...>

### Grammar Practice Worksheets

<http://www.ngllife.com/student-zone/grammar-practice-worksheets>

### Student's book and Workbook audio

<http://www.ngllife.com/content/students-book-and-workbook-audio>

**Online Resources** are also available for teachers to exploit to the maximum and enrich students' learning process.

Some sample activities are listed below:

- 240 interactive activities per level, with 18 different activity types
- Uses the audio and texts from the print Workbook with new activities for revision and practice
- Includes new activities for vocabulary, grammar, writing, speaking and pronunciation
- Uses the Student's Book videos with new activities for revision and practice
- Teachers can set up classes and monitor students' progress in the MyELT grade book
- Available as a stand-alone on the newly updated and tablet-ready **MyELT** platform or as a pack with the Student's Book.

### National Geographic Videos for Young Learners

National Geographic videos present young learners with an eco sensitive environment inside the classroom. This could be the perfect way to bring your English classroom to life. The video titled '**Our World Video**' has 30 fun-filled minutes of video for each unit. It is quite simple to use in the classroom, all 27 hours of **Our World Video** are available on Interactive Whiteboard DVDs, for use with an interactive whiteboard or simply a laptop and projector.

### Technology that brings your Classroom to Life

**Myngconnect** is an online user friendly site for teachers and learners, and provides easy access to resources that support, reinforce and build on the learning done in the classroom.

### Resources for Teachers and Learners

All six levels of **Our World** are fully supported with materials that present, practise, reinforce and extend the content of the Student's Books.

New and updated topics, video, and visuals from National Geographic teaches learners to think and read critically to encourage a generation of informed global citizens.

Reading and learning through National Geographic Videos inspires a generation of informed decision-makers. It helps learners develop the ability to think critically and communicate effectively in the global world. An elaborate Critical Thinking syllabus encourages learners to develop well-informed opinions. National Geographic photographs and videos engage learners by connecting them to people and places from around the world. Students also explore the connections between the content and their own lives. Our mission is to inspire students to learn and acquire the skills they need to be successful in their careers or educational experiences, as well as to become lifelong caretakers of the planet.

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## CHRISTIAN MYSTICAL WRITINGS AS A RESPONSE TO THE BIBLICAL CREATION STORY IN ECOLOGICAL CRISIS

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### Abstract

*Christianity has been considered arrogant toward nature and charged with being the historical root of our ecological crisis. Presenting man as the epitome of creation and emphasising his dominion on nature the creation story in Genesis is considered to be the definitive cause to the crimes against nature. In view of its doctrines and literary creations many in the academic circle generally hold the view that Christianity is environmentally unfriendly. This paper addresses the criticism by presenting the Christian mystical writings and mystical tradition that bring nature to the centre of spirituality. The analysis of the life and works of Christian mystics especially St. Francis of Assisi St. John of the Cross and Thomas Merton is taken into account to show the true eco-spiritual elements in defence of the allegations. Exploring the eco-spiritual elements drawn from the Christian mystical writings which connect the spirit of all religion and humanity, the paper urges a retreat into oneself and nature.*

**Keywords:** *Mysticism, Mystical literature, Eco-spirituality.*

Ecological crisis has been a growing concern globally with the challenges that posed in climatic change and the existence of bio-diversity. In search of the causes of the ecological crisis for facing it with remedial measures, certain religious views were found to be a main root cause of the issue in which Christianity bears a major blame. A cultural historian, Lynn White, blamed Christianity for what has become the environmental crisis. "Christianity bears a huge burden of guilt" for the ecological crisis, he charged in an infamous (at least to religious ecologists) 1966 address to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He argued that bible provided a 'dominion mandate' which affected a kind of human imperialism that ruled at the expense of the rest of the natural world (Bergant, 3). Arnold Toynbee argues that the 'rule over it' verse of genesis is a "licence and an incentive for mechanisation and pollution". (Toynbee, 1971) Presenting man as the epitome of creation and emphasising his stewardship on nature the creation story in Genesis is considered to be the definitive cause to the crimes against nature. The Christian values, attitudes, principles and culture based on this world view is alleged to be a destructive force against the religions that believed in nature worship and eco-spirituality.

There were attempts to respond to this criticism from the religious, theological, biblical and spiritual point of views. As a result there branched out certain areas that are specifically concerned with the ecological crisis. Eco-theology, eco-feminism, eco-justice, creation-spirituality, were among them trying to address the issues concerned

with environment and thus trying to defend the blame previously made on Christianity. Eco-theology emphasising the Christian stewardship focuses on the interpretation of biblical mandate for humans to take care of the earth. The eco-justice position focuses on linking environmental concerns with church perspectives on justice issues such as the just sharing of limited resources and the real cost of environmental problems. It thus combines an already present Christian social justice framework with environmental concerns particularly those that centre on the effects of environmental degradation on peoples of colour and the poor. Creation spirituality, broadly characterized, focuses on reorienting humans to see their place as one part of a larger, pane theistic creation. From this proper ecological place, humans must recognize the need to preserve the whole. Eco-feminist theologians challenge the patriarchal and hierarchical structures that cause the abuse of nature and women, and call for a more integral view of reality and revision of Christian tradition that are compatible with the contemporary concerns of the earth. All these perspectives presented as a defence against the blame and apologetic in nature. All of them are more or less an apologetic enterprise of trying to show that there is already sufficient basis in scripture and tradition for an adequately Christian response to the environmental crisis. But the Christian mystical literatures and their position show a sublime realm of human- nature relationship which is spontaneous and appealing. This paper focuses on the Christian mystical approach to nature as seen in the mystical literary works.

The mystical leaning goes beyond the rudimentary understanding of usual religious views penetrating the spirit of what it advocates and what lies at the centre. These ideas are better expressed through the works of the mystics. Thus the real attitude of a Christian towards nature as it ought to be is reflected in the mystical tradition and writings. According to Evelyn Underhill the mystical progression happens in three stages of purification of self firstly, illumination with the insights of one's co-existence with the universe and finally a union with the Divine. The change that happens in relation to the existence of oneself, with nature or universe and with the Divine as a result of the mystical awareness is analysed here in the mystical literature of Christianity in view of the ecological crisis. In the first stage of mystical progression we see the changes in the perception of oneself. Here the self is struggling for conversion and engaged in learning and strives to understand the facts of one's own problems along with the environment. Then he starts the journey of purification- a rectification of his perception of the self in relation to the nature. The greatest mystic St. John of the Cross in his mystical poem *The Dark Night of the Soul* narrates the beginning of his journey thus:

On a dark night,  
Kindled in love with yearnings—oh, happy chance!—  
I went forth without being observed,  
My house being now at rest.....  
....I remained, lost in oblivion;  
My face I reclined on the Beloved.  
All ceased and I abandoned myself,  
Leaving my cares forgotten among the lilies

Here we see the soul of the mystic is yearning for another realm of experience, a change from his current walks of life and it is the beginning of a journey of self-denial. In his vision of the vanishing existence of his self on earth, the mystic wants to abandon his self and leave all the earthly cares forgotten. This self-denial being initial step of Christian mysticism call for an alteration of his consciousness where one conceives his self as least among the creation. This mystical consciousness overturns the misinterpreted 'rule over' biblical mandate that establishes man's dominion over creation. The authentic self-denial involves facing the dark side of the self, the side that can be ugly, mean and self-serving. It acknowledges the rationalisation that justifies the destruction of us and creation. But it does not aim at self-hatred or self-rejection rather it is intent on purifying the heart and welcoming the creation with their dignity. It can be assumed as we analyse Underhill's idea of mystical

progression along the line of the change of approach in the mystic that the existence of human in its true Christian sense does not mean to be exploiting the rest of the creation.

In Christian spirituality and mysticism the true self does not exist in isolation, disconnected from the rest of the reality. The mystics who progress to the second stage of illumination is infused with the knowledge of their true identities in relation with the Divine and experience a new connection with other people and the world around them. Once they achieve this divine perception they start to see their intimate connection to creation. Merton writes of similar feelings of connectedness with the surroundings and people. He came to see himself as one with the humanity:

"In Louisville, at the corner of Fourth and Walnut, in the centre of the shopping district, I was suddenly overwhelmed with the realisation that I loved all these people, that they are mine and I theirs, that we could not be alien to one another even though we were total strangers. It was like waking from a dream of separateness, of spurious self-isolation in a special world, the world of renunciation and supposed holiness". (Merton, 140)

We see this in Francis of Assisi. Once he stripped himself of the outer image of the troubadour knight, he found himself as God had made him, a poor creature at the service of the Divine. He discovered his intimate relationship with his fellow humans, especially out-casts and the poor. All people are truly his brothers and sisters. Perhaps more intensely than any other mystic Francis saw that all of creation was his family the sun was his brother and the moon his sister. The birds of the air were the sacramental signs of God's presence. This unique vision of a mystic is seen vividly in his poem *The Canticle of Brother Sun*:

....Praised be You, my Lord, with all your creatures, especially Sir Brother Sun, Who is the day and through whom You give us light. And he is beautiful and radiant with great splendor; and bears a likeness of You, Most High One. Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars, in heaven You formed them clear and precious and beautiful. Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Wind, and through the air, cloudy and serene, and every kind of weather through which You give sustenance to Your creatures. Praised be You, my Lord, through Sister Water, which is very useful and humble and precious and chaste. Praised be You, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom You light the night and he is beautiful and

playful and robust and strong. Praised be You, my Lord, through our Sister Mother Earth, who sustains and governs us, and who produces varied fruits with colored flowers and herbs..... (Consol v. 3-9)

This canticle of Francis manifests his sensitivity toward the sacredness of the whole cosmos. The earth is seen as our mother, the abiding source of all living being. "It is the earth that has nourished and nurtured us, it is the earth that has shaped our feelings and sensibilities, our imagination and intellect; it is the earth that has determined the way we grasp truth, goodness, beauty and oneness"(Raja, 649). In Cuthbert's view: "For Francis creation is not something outside of him but it is intimately linked to his consciousness as his larger being- as the environment in which he has his being. This eco-spirituality according to Evelyn Underhill is an "overpowering apprehension" (Underhill, 234). It is a sort of inner illumination. It is the ability to perceive the infinite presence of the Divine immanent in the natural world. In a sense it is a mystical stage endowed with the ability to read the book of creation. It helps to grasp the hidden meaning and symbols present in the natural world.

Life is lived well only when one is completely in tune with the whole universe. Solidarity for Francis extends to the whole of creation from the elements to vegetation, to animals and to earth itself. For him everything created is worthy of praise as they have been created by God, created for man not for him to dominate, but for him to use with brotherly sympathy. This kind of brotherhood call for a responsibility and mutual dependency. The attitude of Francis, Merton and other Christian mystics who emphasize on the interconnectedness of the whole universe is very much relevant in this ecological crisis. The vision they had toward creation is divine as well as human. Francis through his works beautifully speaks about God's splendour in all created beings. His splendour is in the sun, moon, fire, and in all healing herbs. According to Francis the whole of creation runs because of the perfect harmony which exists. Because of the intimate connection between human beings and nature, the inner state of man is reflected in the external order. Therefore when the inner beings of humans have turned to darkness and chaos, nature is also turned from harmony and beauty to disequilibrium and disorder. (Koottiyaniel, 101)

The third stage in the mystical progression is marked by the union of self with the Divine. Here the emphasis on an inside God, a God who dwells within all things as loving

and nurturing presence. This experience of divine union as expressed in the works of St. John of the Cross goes thus:

'Oh night that has united

The Lover with His Beloved

Transforming Beloved in her Lover'

Union with divine is understood as the union with the entire universe. God can be discovered and tasted in the depths of all reality. This is the God of all Christian mystics including John of the Cross, Francis and Merton.

The ancient traditions of Christian mysticism have a lot of insights to contribute which are applicable in the scenario of ecological crisis. Antony of the Desert, a mystic who spent major part of his life in the desert, even in the barrenness of his environment, believed that nature was a book in which one could read the words of the creator. In the early Celtic monastic mysticism there was also a deep love of nature (Hill 253). From the above analysis of the mystical progression of three stages of three dimensional relationship with the whole reality it can be concluded that the Christian spirituality is in no way contribute to the ecological crisis with its biblical views of creation. In fact Christian mysticism challenges the humans to see all creation as part of his own being

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