

An Eco-Critical Study of Human Nature Relationship in a Dystopian World by Sara Joseph's *Gift in Green*

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Abstract

An Eco-critical study of Human nature and its relationship with the environment aims to analyze culture, tradition and life of people depending on the land they inhabit. Sara Joseph is an ardent supporter of nature and its well being who criticizes environmental issues to raise awareness in a dystopian society. Gift in green is an Ecological novel written by Sara Joseph and translated by Valson Thampu. Here the author portrays localities of Chakamkandam where waste gets dumped, causing environmental pollution. There is a conflict between two opposite parties where at last women takes the initiative and solves the problem. Here the author portrays the struggle of women in the society besides culture and tradition in a strong and polite manner. This article traces the impact of cultural feminism, radical feminism in a patriarchal society and the eco spiritual search of life in a dystopian world.

Keywords: *nature, dystopia, environmental issues, cultural feminism, radical feminism, patriarchal society.*

Introduction

Sara Joseph is a Malayalam writer born in 1946 at Kuriachira in Thrissur city. She was a poet, novelist and short story writer. She is a feminist and social activist. Her notable works are *Puthuramayam, Othappu, Suryakanthi*. She received Kendra Sahitya Academy Award and Valayar Award for her best novel *Aalahayude Penmakkal*. In Kerala, Sara Joseph is the forefront of the feminist movement. She is also the founder of the feminist movement She is also the founder of Manushi which is

the organization for women. She also showed her interest in politics too. Sara Joseph has a strong belief in the correspondence between nature and human beings interlocked in the ecosystem

Gift in Green is an unconventional novel that explores the Eco Spiritual search on multiple aspects about the relationship between people and Aathi island. The surrounding metaphor tells us the water life of Aathi Island and its people which shows the degradation of the natural resources. Between the polarities of attachment and abandonment, the darkness and the light, the peoples will to survive is the major process spoken out here. It unfolds the story of the people confronted by the behemoth of progress driven by Kumaran, the protagonist who seeks to abandon water life, threatening its existence in a dystopian world. Sara Joseph's faith in the resilience of life and nature serves us the hope for new beginning. Here, Gift in Green by Sara Joseph describes the changes in the minds of people in the village of Aathi island on their pull towards modernity and their awareness concerning the protection of nature with utmost care.

Relationship between nature and human beings

Environment is the major component in existence of life on earth. It is a reward from nature and needs to be conserved for the benefit of living beings in the present and for the future. Nature plays an important role in the hale and hearty living of human beings as it sustains the living condition of all the species in the earth. Nature is the only home that human beings have, thus providing living beings with air, food and water. Environment is healthy when natural cycle goes without any interruption. Any form of disturbance in the nature's equilibrium affects the Environment entirely which can definitely destroy the lives of humans and other living beings. Here the story revolves around Aathi Island which has its serene environment covered with mangrove trees and paddy field which looks like green bangles. Dinakaran is a young protagonist who is a young farmer in Aathi. Dinakaran has a younger brother and an elder sister Divya who is married to Balettan in Mumbai. Divya adapts her new life amidst polluted city. Shailaja is a woman born in Aathi Island. She is married to Chandramohan government employee living in Chakamkandam, a polluted city. Shailaja is unable to survive, so she leaves Chakkam and goes back to Aathi. Kumaran is the antagonist who has no faith in working hard. He is the first person to sell his property and leaves his homeland. The young Kumaran leaves Aathi island to seek modern life. Years

later, he return back to the same Aathi Island as a money minded business man. He plans to construct bridges and roads by destroying mangrove trees as a result of which Aathi villagers divide themselves into two groups one supporting Kumaran and the other supporting Dinakaran who does not support modernizations by cutting trees. The fury of Dinakaran and his group effort brought end to the relentless progress. This describes the relationship between man and the nature by reflecting the beauty and anguish of the people by disclosing the selfishness of modern humans.

Environmental issues inching towards dystopia

Unlike other literary criticisms which focus on the issues of class, race and religion as criteria for analysis, ecocriticism views the problems of nature in a holistic pattern. Nature is the soul of the village and life of people. But currently the technological developments and modern inventions deplete the natural elements of the earth. The novel revolves around two villages Aathi and Chakkamkandam which were destroyed by manmade ecological imbalance. The depiction of these devastated villages throws light on numerous ecological issues in Kerala taking on a universal significance. In the novel, the author addresses the present situations such as the use of Fertilizers and pesticides which make the land sterile. At the end of the novel, the author explicitly points out that every time man tries to utilize nature by ruling over, it will display its malice through natural disasters to subjugate the self-seeking motives of the humankind.

Conclusion

“The waters of Aathi are not inclined to dry up and vanish just because Kumaran wants it to happen” (GIG332).Aathi villagers work persistently with one voice and one will they wished to witness waves of swaying paddy fields. There is an intrinsic relationship between the way in which we treat the natural world and one another. Dualism and hierarchy are traits of patriarchy that bring about the oppression of women and destruction of natural systems. Thus Sara Joseph’s Eco spiritual search of light and life in a world inching towards dystopia is clearly brought out concerning the current condition of the Environment. Writers like Sara Joseph show rational and well-informed outlook by understanding that humans also play a necessary role in the vast framework of Ecology. As we look back in time we can

notice that most of the natural disasters in India that took place within 60-70 years are exclusively due to misconduct towards nature. The Bhopal Gas tragedy in 1984, Kobra chimney collapse in 2009, Jaipur oil Depot fire in 2009 are some manmade examples due to mere human negligence in failing to maintain the human-nature balance in the ecosystem.

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