

LATITUDE OF NATURE AND LONGING OF HUMANS

Bhavani Singh

Department of Humanities and PSD,
JIET Group of Institution

Abstract

Literature has always shown the emotions of Human that is beyond the reach and something that deeply affect our life. There can be no denial to the fact that Literature is the mirror of life and Life which is symmetrical to the Environment which controls each and every aspect of the Human life. It talks to us in every possible way, all we have to do is develop our heart with the ability to hearing of the nature. With Modernization and Industrial Revolution we have moved far away from nature but still things cannot exists without Nature. We all will be submerging into the Nature one day or the other and then return back to the circle of life. Nature is our best companion and it always tries to teach us something the Coronovirus pandemic is one such perfect example that Nature can teach us in every possible way and it's better to learn it when its calm or else Nature will make its way. In this article I try to explain about how Nature talks to us by exploring the work of Shubhangi Swarup "Latitude of Longing".

Keywords: Eco-criticism, Latitude of Longing by Shubhangi Swarup, Eco-theory, Eco-Literature.

LATITUDE OF NATURE AND LONGING OF HUMANS

- Bhavani Singh

INTRODUCTION

Environment is a very important and prominent part of human life or rather to the Earth. In today's situation of Covid-19 crisis we definitely can see that Nature has started to heal itself or rather nature started to clean the mess that human have created. Nature always is trying to talk to us in one way or the other sometimes it is tough on us but on other time it beauty that it talks through like the beautiful snow fall of Kashmir, great sceneries of Kerala, Beautiful monuments that nature has gifted as. We are filled with nature even if we live in a very congested or urban area. This time is like a call from Mother nature that come to me stop the interaction for few days let the birds sing at your door and let you enjoy the bright sun. There is something that nature is always trying to say and trying its way to connect to us maybe this virus is just an unbounded love of nature towards us. The explicit quality of nature is something that is always been praised in Literature for a long time with nature giving us what the author is trying to say and make us connect with the character too. Let's take an example of King Lear when he is thrown out of his kingdom and there is snow fall and Lear expresses his situation by connecting it with nature and it was important during those times where resources were limited and the character with use of nature can represent or make audience connect with him in better and accurate manner. Eco-criticism talks about the relationship between human and environment and one way of nature talking to us through its conversation like we can see in the novel 'Latitude of Longing' by Shubhangi Swarup. It is an astounding exploration of human through nature and human emotions. Every character here is trying or rather nature is explaining them something intellectual which the humans being close with nature try to figure out throughout their life. It's not just limited towards Natural Calamities but it is also about the unexplored horizon of nature and life.

The novel also has three stories which are like three parameters of nature Air, water and Earth and the story revolves around three characters Giriji Prasad, Mary and Rana and the story explores all these characters through different topographical exploration of nature and their own self-realization.

The opening line of the novel itself showcases the nature where it says "Silence on a tropical Island is the relentless sound of water. The waves, like the sound of your own breathing,

never leave you. Literature well known for reflecting the contemporary issues could not have remained unaffected and from this theme. The world of literature throngs with works dealing with beauty and power of nature. However, the concern for ecology and the threat that the continuous misuse of our environment poses on humanity has only recently caught the attention of the writers. It is this sense of concern and its reflection in literature that has given rise to a new branch of literary theory, namely Ecocriticism.

William Rueckert's essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" (1978) marks the early interest in Ecocriticism. This essay offered an outline for the new discipline: "the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature." According to Branch, the term was first used in literary criticism by Karl Krober, a US ecocritic, but it was Glotfelty who not only revived the term 'Ecocriticism' but urged its adoption to refer to the diffuse critical field that had previously been known as 'the study of nature writing' (www.asle.org)

Eco-criticism has come to mean not only the application of ecology and ecological principles to the study of literature, but also the theoretical approach to the interrelation web of natural cultural and supernatural phenomena. It began to explore constructions of environment in literary texts and theoretical discourse. Since literature has always conditioned our philosophical understanding of nature, of environment. Even the aesthetic categories by which our feelings for nature are understood the beautiful, the picturesque, the scenic, the sublime, the wild etc. have been defined largely their use in literary and critical contexts.

Although not many, there are a few novels in the history of Indian English Literature which can be read through the lens of Ecocriticism. It is true that a serious concern with ecology seems to be lacking in the earlier works, yet nature has been used as an important backdrop against which the story develops. The progress at that time was not very significant, and the writer about something the significance of which the human society had not yet realized. So, it had to be limited to the landscape and the changes that occurred with time at the places described and in nature.

When history is examined we find Raja Rao as one of the most prominent writers of Indian English novels. His depiction of the south Indian village culture and environmental setting is a true depiction of relationship between man and nature. 'In his novel *Kanthapura*' he has shown how rivers and mountains play an important role in people's lives. They have names for them. In this novel they call the mountain as Goddess Kenchamma and they consider it responsible for both-their prosperity and their adversity. Raja Rao writes about Kenchamma in the novel, "Kenchamma you are not kind to us. Our field is full of younglings." These first few pages of *Kanthapura* reminds us of the age old practices of our ancestors when nature was revered in the true literal sense. Besides these few pages in the beginning we, however, do not find any further discussion on it in the novel.

R.K Narayan wrote in the same decade and has given life to a place, Malgudi, or it can be said that he developed a place as a character which can be seen in almost all his prose fiction. In other words he used landscape as important feature in his novel. Even with his work of 'The Guide' he has used the nature like mountains, and most importantly 'clouds' as both imaginative figure in the end of his text where Raju in the end see's the cloud as metaphor of whether there is rain and is there a rain fall, whether Raju is dead or not we are not aware of that too, This too closely talks about how nature has played an important part in our life.

LATITUDE OF LONGING

The incompleteness of human nature is filled only through Nature and that is something which is reflected in the novel "Latitude of Longing" The author shows all the deep relationship of Man which gets filled by the presence of Nature, the relationship of 'Husband & wife', 'Mother & Son' and Friendship.

The novel is a part of How nature talks to human through Human, which again can be related to the present Covid-19 situation that Nature is showing how much damage we as humans have done and are doing to it.

"The waves, like the sound of your own breathing, never leave you".

The beginning of the story portrays about how the conversation with Nature is for the people who never listen, understand and observe the Nature.

GIRIJA PRASAD AND CHANDA DEVI

Girija Prasad a young scientist of plants who with his wife Chanda Devi who is an explicit positive and a person who can hear the voice of Tree, Mountains, Ghosts. Her interpretation with her husband's understanding of nature gives us the proper glimpse of how we actually should be talking to the nature.

'We are the children of the soil, but they are the fruit,' she says. They are more sensitive.

Earthquakes and devastating storms shape the life of Girija Prasad, his love for Chanda Devi, the birth of their daughter, and his own end as he follows a retreating tsunami to examine the bare ocean floor, certain of death but a curious scientist to the last. The author many a times tries to express that Human and Nature are no different from the Theory of 'Survival of Fittest' to the Emotional Attachments both Nature and Human go hand in hand

"That rose plant you carted all the way from kalimpong,' she tells him, her eyes focussed on the wall instead of his face, 'one of its leaves has caught fungus'

This line also represents the emotion relationship that Chanda Devi and Girija Prasad is going through as Chanda Devi has an ability or as a child of Nature can talk to her Mother but people

around her found it absurd and unnatural. We as Humans and with Industrial Revolution and Modernization have forgot that even after being away from Nature and perusing that Science has over taken everything, we forget that life makes its way so does Nature and without it there would be no Industrialization, No modernization

MARY, PLATO AND THAPA

"Seated before the Buddha, Mary prays for the Pigeon and the Mynah."

clear, pure and Innocent heart of Mary is expressed in this line as if she is Nature in herself

These three characters in the Novel are an extension of the novel it's because of them that the novel is not just limited around Burma and the Andamans. In karakoram mountains, not India but not Pakistan either. Mary an young women who is lost from life after her husband's death which turns out to be a murder to save her and her child from the brutality of her husband. Chanda Devi finds Mary and brings her to her house as an helper. Soon after the death of Chanda Devi she takes on a voyage to find her son who is studying in one of the universities in India. Renamed as Plato, which clearly signifies his lost nature and unattempted Journey in the world of Industrialization, being in prison Thapa (his friend) tries to re unite Plato and his mother. Their Journey is similar to the Journey of Man and Nature, just how Girija Prasad resisted upon the insistence of science and soon after the death of Chanda Devi found Voice in Nature that he is trying to understand and later submerged into Nature. Mary and her son struggle till the end of their life their struggle is like a struggle of Sky and Earth. Those last lines are nothing but blessings to read the relationship of Mother and Son who meet when they are both old

"One of the just-released prisoners walks out into the street with unsure steps. He looks around. He halts. He waves to them. His smile reveals evidence of his imprisonment-broken teeth. The man waves back. The women looks like she is about to break down.

The photographer (the clouds) has tears in his eyes as he watches them embrace. No words are exchanged. The two of them, equally frail, hold on to each other as if they had never been apart, as if the cord had never been cut. Who else could they be, but a mother and son?

RANA

We all are aware of cycle of nature it ends from where it starts, this novel too ends in the same way. Rana a scientist and grandson of Girija Prasad and Chanda Devi, he represents the mixture of both grand father and mother he has got the quality of scientist from Girija Prasad and an ability to talk to plants, singing songs and hallucinates about a yellow-eyed yeti wandering on the ice outside.

INTERACTION OF HUMAN AND NATURE

All these human interaction beats the insistent pulse of the earth and its future. A planetary calamity casts its shadow from the beginning, foretold in subtle signs such as the tiny fossils that begin to stir in the frozen rock on top of a mountain. The Earth often shakes, monstrous waves often rise and human endeavors are obliterated again and again. Each story is the discovery of the old character but from the voice of nature.

She clearly portrays the ways to understand Nature its does and doesn't and how nature walks with us in every step of our life, how it fills us with all the six sense that human possesses, Nature is the fuel for all these senses that human processes.

LANGUAGE OF NATURE

"There is nothing in Nature that nature itself cannot cure,"

these words by Girija Prasad motivates us even this current scenario of Covid- 19 and Literature never fails to reflect the mirror of life. We clearly can see that there is something Nature is trying to do through this scenario and we as Girija Prasad lack the ability to read it and its time for us to wear the speck of Chanda Devi and her shoes and walk towards nature which will lead to a more prosperous future like Rana.

There must be no tension between the two poles, man and his/her natural world. when tension arises, it can be resolved when man incorporates himself/herself into nature. To understand the critical situation that the world is undergoing human should start to live in harmony with the surroundings.

In Ecological terms, when an interaction takes place between human and elements of nature, the author reflects it through geological, botanical, zoological as well as social aesthetic and psychological consideration.

Works Cited:

- Glotfelty, Cheryl. "Introduction: Literary Studies in an age of Environmental crisis," in The Ecocriticism Reader. Eds., Glotfelty and Form. Athens and London: University of Georgia Press, 1996.
- Parmod K Nayar: Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory (From Structuralism to Ecocriticism)
- Journal of English Language and Literature (JOELL) "Eco-criticism, Eco-Theory and Teaching of Literature. by Noushad PM
- Indian review of world Literature in English "Ecocriticism in Indian Fiction by Kumari Shikha
- Journal of English Language and Literature (JOELL) Literature and Environment : An Ecocritical Approach to Haifaa Al-Sanoussi's Departure of the Sea. by Abdulhamid Alansary

