

The Message of Belyanda Waugh "Save the Earth" through the Poem Mother Earth

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Abstract: *The nature has always been a fascinating place for everyone. One gets nurtured in a lap of the nature and one feels relaxed in its company. It offers happiness, peace of mind and solace and works as a healer too. Many creative writers portray nature in their words and celebrate the nature through their writings and highlight a pleasure of its beauty. One cannot ignore the fact that the survival of human beings is totally depend on the existence of nature. However, today everyone is exploiting and deforesting the nature and thus making the earth ugly. The modern lifestyle, materialistic attitude, greed for luxurious life lead us to deteriorate the nature and environment around us. One needs to be careful and conscious for nature's significant role in settling human beings. Like environmentalists, scientists, researchers many creative writers also have handled an issue of nature as a core topic of their writings. Consequently, "green literature", a literature that represents or depicts the nature, shows a close connection between human beings and nature. These writers not only have appreciated nature for its beauty but highlighted its declining condition also as they claim that human beings are responsible for a plight of earth's today's condition. Many writers treat the earth as "mother" and they address her as "Mother Earth." The present paper attempts to highlight the message of nurture nature to strengthen the future with the reference of Belyanda Waugh's poem Mother Earth. It also attempts to focus green literature's contribution in the conservation of the nature.*

Keywords: Green Literature, Mother Earth, Save the Earth

I. INTRODUCTION

The nature plays a vital role in the development of every human being as they are nurtured in a lap of nature. It gives happiness, peace of mind, solace and also works as a healer too. For the relaxation, one turns to nature only. Being in the company of nature, or even viewing scenes of nature, it reduces anger, fear and stress and increases pleasant and positive feelings. One must understand the significance of the nature as it provides both health and happiness. Consequently, the importance of nurturing and preserving nature has come at the consciousness of many academics, educationalists, scholars, researchers, scientists and environmentalists to promote it through a variety of branches of study of nature like Green Literature, Eco-criticism, Eco-feminism and Eco-tourism.

II. GREEN LITERATURE

In a simple words, one can define the "green literature" as looking at literature through a green lens. Nature and literature has always shared a close relationship which is reflected in the works of writers of all ages in a world. Poets and writers have contributed their best in protecting environment through their writings. The representation of nature and its beauty in literature is labelled as Green Studies. It aims at to promote nature and protect nature. The existence of green literature thus gives a message of appreciation and preservation of nature or environment. The common themes of green literature are nature and the preservation of it. In literature, nature and environment have been depicted in different ways: descriptions of landscapes and flora and fauna, its destruction, degradation and deterioration but an important topic to be evaluated is the interaction of these natural elements with humans. The literary critics pay attention on the analysis of the strong relationship or bond between the nature and society.

2.1 Eco-criticism

Eco-criticism is an interdisciplinary study of literature and environment. The term "eco-criticism was coined in 1978 by William Rueckert in his essay, *Literature and Ecology : An Experiment in Eco-criticism*. As a world faces an

ecological crisis, a new area of study is added in literature its study. This environmentally oriented study of literature is also known as Environmental Literary Criticism, Green Studies etc. It aims to explore the relation between literature and nature. Thus, eco-criticism is an art of making judgment on the relationship between the nature and literature.

2.2 Eco-feminism

Eco-feminism is a movement that sees a connection between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression of woman. It emerged in the 1970s alongside second wave feminism and green movement. Eco-feminism thus, brings together both issues-feminism and environment. Eco-feminist highlight women's intimate connection with nature, as women have a significant role in reproduction which brings her closer to the nature. Like nature, women are "life givers" and nurtures. The nature also becomes a comforter to women who gains emotional strength and inspiration from it.

In short, the nature, women and literature are closely inter related, inter connected and inter mingled subjects with each other. There is an intimate bond among these three issues. Eco-criticism or eco-feminism are the fusion of nature and literature and nature and women. A literature is the best example for the reflection of both the issues-women and the nature.

III. ENGLISH LITERATURE AND NATURE

The natural beauty and natural world have always been remained a fascinated topic for all the poets. The observation and feel of colourful eternal beauty of nature has always been drawn an attraction of creative writers. For instance, the description of beauty of meadows, landscape, snow covered mountains, deep and dark forests, waterfall, blooming of flowers and its scent and fragrance, setting sun, starry nights, beaches, roaring waves, lake, rain, chirping of birds have enriched all literatures.

English literature especially, poems have occupied a large space by appreciating the of beauty of nature. With the emergence of doctrine of romanticism, the nature comes at a centre of creative writers. For instance, a remarkable contribution of William Wordsworth, S. T. Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Byron, Robert Frost etc. in the depiction of nature as a core theme of their poetry is noteworthy. The poems like "Rainbow", "Daffodils", "Ode to West Wind", "Ode to Nightingale", "Ode to Cuckoo", "Ode to Skylark", "Ode to Autumn", "The Road Not Taken", "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening", "After Apple Picking", "Tree at My Window", "Nothing Gold Can Stay" etc. are the best nature poems through which the relationship between literature and human beings is explored in their literature. These nature poems focus either its beauty or philosophy of life through the nature. The Contemporary Indian English poets express their concern for ecological degradation through their poetry. Even pre-independence Indian English poetry of Toru Datta's "Lotus" and "Our Casuarian Tree", "Baugmaree", Sarojini Naidu's "Champak Blossoms" "Summer Woods", "Village Song" celebrates nature while Gieve Patel's "On Killing a Tree", A. K. Ramanujan's "Ecology" and Dilip Chitre's "Felling of Banayan Tree" throws light on a changing perspective of generation towards the nature. Moreover, these poems give a message to stop killing or cutting the trees.

3.1 Similarities between Mother and Nature:

There is a close connection between a mother and the nature. Keeping at the centre, certain common qualities between a mother and the nature like fertility, unconditional and selfless love, hard work, patience, caring, sharing, nurturing, forgiveness, spirit of strength, quality of healing, committed or devoted, service and sacrifice, positivity, conservation quality etc. they can be compared with each other. Moreover, a mother is worshiped as a teacher (*Guru*) and the nature is a deity.

Both a mother and nature have a fertility value. They are creative as they give birth to new life. Caring, Sharing, Nursing and Nurturing are an innate qualities of both a mother and the nature. Their lives is devoted for the Same rather it becomes their prime activity in their life. Motherly unconditional love is an essence of their roles. A mother showers her unconditional love on her child and the nature also cares for human beings in all ways. A mother and nature are always in the role of offering and they never expect anything from human beings. Thus, they are the standard parameters of unconditional and selfless love. A quality of endurance can be observed in both a mother and nature. Both tolerate many things for the happiness of their children. Forgiveness is a distinguished quality of a mother and nature. Both are

able to forgive their children for their extreme crime. It may be because they are good, pure hearted and carry only good feelings for their children. An undisputable quality of both-a mother and the nature is that they carry fighting spirit in odd situations or circumstances which exhibit their strength to face challenges rather to surrender them. A capacity of healing the others is definitely amazing quality of a mother and the nature. One gets cured immediately in the company of them. One experiences relaxation and calmness in their company. A mother and the nature are the best examples of positivity. Their presence bestow the positivity. Their company makes one to forget his/her distress and negativity and help to change one's mood. Both-a mother and the nature are committed for the fulfillment of their promises and devoted their duties. They never turn back from their responsibilities. A mother does hard work to satisfy the child's needs and nature too works hard to protect and sustain human life. A mother and the nature express their conservation quality through their activities. Their efforts are always to cherish the environment-either homely or surroundings. Both are meant for the service to others and ready for sacrifice for them. A mother's important duty is to pay attention to her child and nature is also attentive to offer its services to human beings.

3.2 The Concept *Mother Earth*

As one observes a striking similarities between the two- a mother and the nature, one may tend to address the nature as mother. All motherly qualities can be traced in nature that enable poets to call the nature a Mother. However, the concept of Mother Nature has its roots in Greek mythology. The Greek creation myth told of the goddess, Gaia, and the god, Uranus, who fell in love. Uranus was the sky and Gaia was the Earth. The goddess Gaia eventually gives birth to nature. Together they had many children and grandchildren, who created the plants, animals, stars and springs. The unity of Gaia and Uranus created a sense that the universe was one. Thus, the concept of Mother Earth is introduced in the literature.

Many poets have written poems entitled *Mother Earth* and have expressed their gratitude towards the nature. In these poems, they treat earth as mother and have attributed motherly qualities to earth. Some poets appreciate her beauty and pleasure value while some highlighted its deterioration and man-made plight of degradation. The poets like Belyanda Waugh and Henry Van Dyke not only express their emotions and gratitude for nature through their poems but they alert and advice the readers to take care of the nature around them. Their poems reflect the mixture of bright and dark side of the nature, the positive and negative feelings and gloomy and hopeful tones regarding the nature at the centre.

Mother Earth is a personification of nature as a woman that considered as the source and guiding force of creation which focuses on the life-giving and nurturing aspects of nature by embodying it, in the form of the mother. Everything that human beings needed to survive is provided by the natural world around us food, water, medicine, materials for shelter, and even natural cycles such as climate and nutrients.

3.3 Belyanda Waugh's poem *Mother Earth*

Belynda Waugh of Yiman descent was born in Queensland in 1957 and is an illustrator, painter, carver and potter. Her paintings were exhibited in the 2001 Brisbane exhibition "Gatherings, Contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art from Queensland, Australia"

The poem "*Mother Earth*" by Belyanda Waugh expresses her regret for the plight of the earth for which human beings are responsible as they disturbed her natural beauty for their comfort. The Earth is called as Mother Earth due to its nurturing of the life just as a mother.

The poem consists of 4 stanzas with 8 lines each. Each line of a stanza opens with addressing "Mother earth our mother earth". Through the repetition of the line mother earth, the poetess may want to hammer that earth is our mother, yet we exploit her and make her ugly. She says:

Mother earth our mother earth
she is the one who gave us birth
the tree, soils, mountains and hills
All are one by one getting killed
Mother earth our mother earth
she was once full of happiness and mirth
rivers, seas, lakes and wells

In this place many creature dwell

In the first stanza the poetess remembers us that mother earth has given us birth. Our livelihood and survival is depended on her. However, instead of expressing our gratitude towards her, we damage her limbs-tress, soils, mountains and hills and thus day by day we make her ugly. But in the next stanza, the poetess remembers how it was once remained the beautiful living place for all creatures. Her beauty in form of rivers, seas, lakes and wells was once the source of happiness and attraction. She further says:

Mother earth our mother earth
Is now completely beleaguered
People know only how to blare
things are some times really bizarre

Mother earth our mother earth
we get to hear so many canards
in this world full of terrorism
there are very few with humanism

The poetess regrets for the present pitiable condition of mother earth for which people are responsible. She further says that we know only to attack and snatch her resources. We now show a little concern for her beauty and more interest in our profit. Thus, we exploit her terribly which withers her natural beauty. Nowadays, the earth is ruined under the terrorist attack and many rumors are heard. There is a very little space for humanism. Though human beings destruct the beauty of nature, she showers love and kindness to her children and thus expresses her humanism towards us.

One may remember here Dilip Chitre's poem "*The Felling of Banayan Tree*" which is the best example of degradation of the nature for our greed for materialistic life. The poet says:

The banyan tree was three times as tall as our house
Its trunk had a circumference of fifty feet
Its scraggy aerial roots fell to the ground
From thirty feet or more so first they cut the branches
Sawing them off for seven days and the heap was huge
Insects and birds began to leave the tree
And then they came to its massive trunk
Fifty men with axes chopped and chopped
The great tree revealed its rings of two hundred years

The above lines from "*The Felling of Banayan Tree*" are appropriate to draw our attention towards the fact that to what extent we contribute to deteriorate the nature around us. The description of huge banayan tree reveals that how old the tree is. However, for our selfish purposes, we cut it, we destroyed it.

In the next stanza, the poetess says:

Mother earth our mother earth
no one understands its worth
people work with a lot of zeal
only to make money for their meal

Mother earth our mother earth
there are so many who experienced a blizzard
the earth is turning apocalyptic
but no one still is apologetic

Waugh says that no one understands the value and the significance of the nature or the earth in their daily life. People are busy only in earning money and fulfilling their needs. They have no time for paying attention towards the nature and to appreciate her beauty. She says:

Mother earth our mother earth
in the forests, we hear sweet birds chirp

trees are being cut one by one
but people on earth are planting none

Mother earth our mother earth
Oh please stop filling it with dirt!
we are destroying it no one other
Save our mother
Save mother earth

As forests are being cut, birds have no place to make their nests therefore their chirping is also now rare. Though this is the fact, the people do not take initiative in planting the trees. Then the poetess appeals to people to stop their activities which spoil the beauty of mother earth and making her dirty. She blames all the human beings for destructing her and claims that they are responsible from her deterioration. Her earnest request is to save our mother, save our earth, save our mother earth.

3.4 Henry Van Dyke's poem *Mother Earth*

One may compare Waugh's *Mother Earth* poem with Henry Van Dyke's (1852-1933) poem *Mother Earth* for sharing the Same title. Both address the earth as a mother for her fertility, nurturing and nursing quality. Waugh's poem begins with a sad note and ends with a hope and appeal to bring the positive change in the beauty of the nature. Henry Dyke's poem too appreciates the earth for giving the birth to gems like poets and singers. Mother of all the high-strung poets and singers departed. He says:

Mother of all the grass that weaves over their graves the glory of the field,
Mother of all the manifold forms of life, deep-bosomed, patient, impassive,
Silent brooder and nurse of lyrical joys and sorrows!
Out of thee, yea, surely out of the fertile depth below thy breast,

However, at the end of the first stanza and in the beginning of the second stanza, the tone of the poem shifts to sadness throwing light on how her dust changed in red colour due to the attacks on her. Though the earth suffers a lot, she tolerates everything silently without any resistance. He adds the lines:

Issued in some strange way, thou lying motionless, voiceless,
All these songs of nature, rhythmical, passionate, yearning,
Coming in music from earth, but not unto earth returning.
Dust are the blood-red hearts that beat in time to these measures,
Thou hast taken them back to thyself, secretly, irresistibly
Drawing the crimson currents of life down, down, down
Deep into thy bosom again, as a river is lost in the sand.

However, the poet shifts his mood from negative to positive as he states that the poets and singers have died, but their songs and poems are still alive. He says:

But the souls of the singers have entered into the songs that revealed them,
Passionate songs, immortal songs of joy and grief and love and longing:
Floating from heart to heart of thy children, they echo above thee:
Do they not utter thy heart, the voices of those that love thee?

While ending the poem, the poet expresses his gratitude towards the earth for making the place beautiful with her landscaping and natural beauty. He glorifies the earth for transforming it into a heaven with her touch of natural resources. He says:

Long hadst thou lain like a queen transformed by some old enchantment
Into an alien shape, mysterious, beautiful, speechless,
Knowing not who thou wert, till the touch of thy Lord and Lover
Working within thee awakened the man-child to breathe thy secret.
All of thy flowers and birds and forests and flowing waters
Are but enchanted forms to embody the life of the spirit;

Thou thyself, earth-mother, in mountain and meadow and ocean,
Holdest the poem of God, eternal thought and emotion.

In short, both the poems *Mother Earth* admire the natural beauty of the earth and its pleasant landscaping however, they also highlight the issue of deforestation and harming it. As far as the present scenario is concerned, our *Mother Earth* faces many problems like climate change, global warming, air, water, sound, soil pollutions, waste disposal, acid rain, ozone layer depletion, and many other prove harmful for every human, animal, and nations on this planet. The poems give a message that one must show concern for the upcoming generation and need to be attentive towards the nature. One must not ignore the fact that our society, our survival, our livelihood in fact, our very existence is depended on the nature. Our forests, rivers, oceans and soils provide us with the food we eat, the air we breathe, the water we irrigate our crops, hence, we must be grateful towards the earth. We also rely on her for numerous other goods and services. We depend on the nature for our health, happiness, harmony and prosperity.

In a nutshell, the poem *Mother Earth* by Belyanda Waugh exclusively expresses her genuine concern to protect the nature and her urge to save the earth. Through her poem, she does not preach anything to her readers but makes them alert by pointing out the difference in the changing look of the earth from beautiful to ugly, from a crystal clean place to a filthy one. She just humbly requests them to stop the ruin of the earth and save the earth and save the mother earth.

IV. CONCLUSION

To conclude, it can be stated that many creative writers have shared their emotions and feelings of gratitude towards the earth and have appreciated its significance in the development and settlement of human beings' life. The former poets praise the mother earth for its pleasant side while the modern poets share a gloomy side of the nature in their verses. In short, they lament over the condition of the earth and their lamentation makes the readers to think of the nature and its plight. Through their writings, they make their readers aware of the sensitive issue of the nature or environmental problems. The green literature always supports and contributes to motivate its readers to take initiative to protect and nurture the nature for future generation. It attempts to develop the environmental consciousness among its readers. The nature inspires the poets for writing and the nature is celebrated through their writings. Thus, the close bond can be observed between the nature and the literature. Through their writings, they indirectly promote their readers and societies for nurturing nature for better future. So, it is the duty of the lovers of literature-writers and readers-to think and act in order to save our Mother Earth.

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