

**ECOCRITICAL EVALUATION IN ANITA RAU'S *THE HERO'S WALK*
THE STUDY OF ECO-CULTURE IN CONTEXT WITH INDO-CANADIAN ECOLOGY**

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Research Article

**Ecocritical Evaluation In Anita Rau'S *The Hero`S Walk*
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ABSTRACT

In this era of globalization all the disciplines are connecting and emerging together. It is accepted by all that science, technology, social sciences, economics, environment and ecology are the integral parts to study literature. Literature is considered to be the mirror of life. It is a proclivity to study literature with an ecological perspective. The consolidation of human and non-human entities create the strong impact to purge into the unearthed field of eco-critical cultural study of literary work. Anita Rau Badami is an Indian Writer writes in the contemporary era. Her themes and stories are about the Indian, Canadian topographies and cultures. Her novel explores the eco-cultural ethics in India and Canada. The eco-criticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the environment. But the environment is hereby considered with a view to moralistic standard.

Eco criticism means the study of nature in connection with thematic aspect, artistic, social, ideological, economical, climate change, food crisis, water, toxicity, deforestation, globalization and of course environmental study. So, fundamentally, nature's influence on our lives and our literature is to be established in this research paper from the novel.

Badami Anita Rau depicted the town Toturpuram. She gave it body and roads, in many ways the town resembles a section of Madras before it became Chennai. In the beginning of the novel there is a fine setting of sea-shore, boats, waves, froth, sand, the sun means interrelation of human and non-human entities. Throughout the novel page to page the deep delineation of nature, seashore, seasons, impact of environment on human beings and their deeds actions are criticized in this research paper. The elaboration of Brahmin street indicates the ecological cultural change.

In conclusion Barry Commoner's view is justified that everything is connected to everything. It shows the commitment to making connection. Nature is connected to environment. Environment is connected to human beings. Human beings are connected with non-human objects. It is like universal circular process of everything. Everything is connected to everything.

This is a qualitative research on the basis of content analysis. It is a kind of library research done with the help of review of related literary (historical=past) research.

INTRODUCTION

The present research has a special focus on eco-cultural elements, incidents of the novel. This research is the study of mutual transformation between human and non-human objects of life throughout different cultures. Basically the research ignites the ecology and culture. The ecology is well defined B.R.Shah in his book of *Basics of Environmental Studies* in Engineering branch.

The word Ecology is derived from two greek words “oikos” meaning house, habitation or place of living and “logos” meaning study. Ecology is a study of the interrelationship between living organism and their biological, physical environment. The physical environment includes wind, moisture, light, heat, oxygen and carbon dioxide nutrients in soil, water and atmosphere. The biological environment includes organisms of all kind as well as plants and animals. Ecology means study of living organisms, both plants and animals in their natural surroundings. The word ecology is classified into autecology and synecology. (1)Autecology deals with study of individual organism or an individual species. In other words it is the study of inter relationship between individual species or its population and environment e.g. a tree in a forest. (2) Synecology deals with study of group of organism or species which are associated together as a unit. It is concerned with structure, nature, development and causes of distribution of communities e.g. a forest(Shah2.3).

Shefali Shah has depicted the interrelationship amongst and between Environment and ecology, she edited in her book that,

Some scientist define environment as “Everything except me is my Environment.” In other words, we can say that everything present outside an individual is called his/her environment. It has air, water, soil, material. It also has plants, animals, mountain, forest, desert etc. collectively they make nature. This nature to which we belong is our Environment. It may be defined in different ways. Environment is derived from old French word “environ” means encircle or surround. Thus all living (Biotic) and nonliving (Abiotic) entities surrounding us are included in environment. The term Environment is used to mean the region, surroundings or circumstances in which anything exists and everything external to the organism is included in it. In context of human beings, environment may be defined in number of ways.

- (i) Environment is the sum of all social, economical, biological, physical or chemical factors which constitute the surroundings of man, who is both creator and moulder of his environment.
- (ii) Environment refers to the sum total of conditions which surrounding man at a given point in space and time.
- (iii) Environment is the representative of physical components of the earth where in man is the important factor influenced by his environment.
- (iv) As per environment (protection) Act. 1986, Environment is sum total of water, air and land, inter relationship amongst themselves and also with the human beings, other living organisms and property(Shah5).

After this much intimation, the environment is categorized into two types as natural environment and manmade environment. In a natural environment the environmental system is developed by the

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evolutionary process of mechanism like air, water, soil and other material etc. The natural environment consist of living and nonliving components. While man made environment is known as Anthropogenic environment. It is of transport vehicles, dams, canals, roads, power plants, industries etc. Even lake, rivers sea level etc. are part of non living components of Ecological environment. So, every aspect of ecological environment is studied with a view to novel *The Hero's Walk* in this research paper. It means how cultural beliefs and practices helped human populations adapt to their environments and how people used elements of their culture to maintain their ecosystems. Thus, ecoculture sounds asif the mixture of ecology and culture. Culture is a broad term. It has no boundaries. Culture generates from generation to generation. Culture adapts certain change and becomes atmosphere-friendly or system-friendly. The collaborative change in culture with a view to environment is known as eco-culture. The literary work is critically studied with an ecocultural perspective. Ecocriticism is defined elaborately by Dr. Richa Dewani in her *A Handbook of Literary Terms*,

Ecocriticism is a term coined by William Rueckert in 1978 for criticism focused on writings about the natural world. The ecocritic asserts that the natural environment is a central subject matter for humanistic concern. At the same time, ecocritics tend to suggest that nature is alien to human culture. Nature, in its indifference, exposes as false human attempts to use it for our own sym-bolic purposes; but the naturalist who properly attends to the environment can enlist it fruitfully.

Ecocriticism can be seen as a peculiar version of pastoral. Determined to solve the complex situation of humans living in a world that is “ not our own and, much more, not ourselves”(Wallace Stevens), ecocritics put their faith in the reconciling simplicity of a landscape. But they also assert, in contrast to traditional pastoral, that the landscape is essentially foreign, a scene that cannot supply us with the aesthetic and emotional satisfaction that we want(Dewani119).

Nature is one that operates in its own force in literature, one that operates outside of human principles and motivations. Although it grants new insight into people. Throughout the novel page to page the deep delineation of nature, seasons, impact of environment on human beings and their deeds, actions are criticized in this research paper.

Eco-cultural element in the setting of the novel:

In the beginning of the novel there are delineations of nature in various embodiments like setting of seashore. The connection between the people and environment is presupposed by the description of fishermen, their families and the seashore waves, boats, froth, sand, the sun means interrelation of human and non-human entities. Even strong humanism is observed as initially the authoress indicates the mothers, wives, daughters, and sisters helping their men folk (the fishermen) at the seashore. The stinking of seafood make them the way to get the first seats in the bus. The nature really helps grants new insights into people. This is actually the opening of the novel some of the lines are here from the original text,

All along the beach, fishermen towed their boats ashore and emptied their nets of the night's catch. Their mothers and wives, daughters and sisters, piled the prawn and the crab, the lobster and the fish, into large, damp baskets still redolent of the previous day's load, and then, leaving the shimmering scales and cracked shells for the crows to fight over, they caught the first bus to the market,

laughing as other passengers hastily moved to the front and made way for them and their odorous wares(Badami1).

The extreme heat was unbearable to suffer by the people of Toturpuram. They did not resist the temperature the town longed for monsoon to intrude in. Squalid town is introduced as having the tenuous beauty. It means the natural beauty could be studied with keen observation. Then in the next incident, the telephone call created a sudden drastic change in the household of Brahmin street's big building. Sripathi's cane chair was the oldest one which had been survived for at least twenty years of ferocious Sun and Rain. In the sad, morose atmosphere the clanging of the Krishna temple bell brought a soft musical treatment. The elaboration of the Brahmin street indicated the ecological cultural change. The tender smell of fresh jasmine, incense sticks and virtue in stead of the chanting of sacred hymns the street had become loud with the haggling of cloth merchants and vegetables vendors parlours whose windows flaunted gaudy posters of busty, thick thighed heroines. Shripathi's house's antique things windows, doors, furniture, the constant traffic sounds, the cracked-tiled floors, every small parts of the house-hold reminded us to study the nature with a view to artistic or ecological, ecocultural (means modernized pastoral) element.

Anita Rau Badami and Eliza MCarthy discussed about the novel.

Setting is a device used by most authors, to represent the elements of time, place and social context in their work. These elements help in creating a mood, building a character or providing credibility to the events that take place during the time period of the novel. Throughout the novel, *The Hero's Walk* by Anita Rau Badami, different proportions of these elements are revealed to help the plot move forward. This novel is set in a town of Toturpuram situated in India; telling a story about the hardships of a middle class Indian family who have been living in the same house for several decades. The story revolves around a Canadian-raised orphan's clash between tradition and modernity, who is forced to live with her grandparents in India, after losing both her parents in a car accident. This novel is a wise and affectionate portrait of middle class life in India during the 20th century. The religious influence, traditional culture and weak political system of India have been accurately reflected in this novel(Badami360).

Eco-cultural element in plot of the novel

For plot Henry James said,

Character, in any sense in which we can get at it, is action, and action is plot and any plot which hangs together, even if it pretends to interest us only in the fashion of a chinese puzzle plays upon our emotion, our suspense, by means of personal references(Liddel72)

This making of a plot is to create a web of actions. It is a chain of actions. The actions move in channel and situations are created. Of course it is the work of characters. The expansion of situations is the main source of plot. The plot is formed by linking of episodes. Badami presented vivid pictures with elaborate situations in their novels. Generally, it is found that plot successfully deduced from one striking incident to other. Here Badami has taken the inanimate object telephone which brought a sudden shock to the people of Big Building when they got the message of Maya and her husband's accidental death. The

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dangerous combination of human and nonhuman entities exposes the significant role of environment in their time and space.

Badami had taken many abiotic components in the novel. In one of the incidents, Sripathi went to the box. The box reminded him many nostalgia experiences of the past of his writing hobby and incidents with his children. Sripathi was thinking about his writing and how it matured considerably. Here is a paragraph from the text itself,

Sripathi reached for a large wooden box on the table before him. Like almost everything else in Big House, the box had been in his family for as long as he could remember. He loved the smooth edges, the solid weight, the thick key that locked it. He opened the lid.....(Badami,9).

So, this way there are many nonhuman elements taken in the novel. Gifford quotes,

Nature is the name under which we use the nonhuman to validate the human, to interpose a meditation able to make humanity more easy with itself(Coupe,175).

Eco-feminist perspectives in characters

Ecofeminist literature promotes an interrelationship with both community and the land. Here community is particularly female characters and land is to be understood in a broader sense including all the biotic and abiotic objects. Women characters are studied with feminist concerns. From the ancient time to present, woman and nature are intermingled in plenty of fictional works with vernacular topics. The central claim of ecofeminism is the connection between environmental degradation and the subordination of women. Women's intimation with nature. Their body, physical structure everything even their submissive attitudes or revengeful revaults all are studied in order to women's different roles and characters like dichotomous, conceptual, maternity, femininity, sexuality, fertility, control, obedience, detachment, emotions, rational ,irrational ,matriarchy, womanhood or womanism every aspect is to studied with a view to ecology and environment.

Nirmala is presented as the traditional Indian woman. She wears sarees and traditional bindis, her black hair, smooth, sweet-tempered face, broad forehead, red sticker-bindi, curvy body, heavy buttocks, bare waist. All these description can be compared like a description of river, tree, lake or nature. Her on- and off-appearances in the novel creates a stir of desire in Sripathi. She herself was like a tree full of riped fruits always bleeful, graceful and natural in tone.

Maya was the daughter of Sripathi and Nirmala. She had a quite little role in the novel. When Maya and Nirmala together had planted some of the mango and guava trees, the banana plants and coconut palms, and had been rewarded with a steady supply of fruit. Sripathi pointed out how neat and clean the garden used to be before Maya had gone to America. But as she had left nobody took such care as earlier.

Nandana was the daughter of Maya. She loved to eat the Fuji apples. Although she was alone without her parents, she used to feel aloof and wanted to eat apples but she didn't declare it.

Thus, environment is spread in all the three characters of first, second and third generation. Ecology has become the part of culture. Women are the embodiments of culture and environment.

Eco cultural aspects in themes of novel

The novel has many diasporic themes of immigrant issues, relationships, assimilation of culture adaptations of cultures feministic suppressions, cultural clashes etc. Yet the most important point of view is its ecological, environmental delineation which starts from busy Toturpuram to Vancouver, Canada.

In Conclusion, I found here fusions of three perspectives to be researched in general environment, culture and ecofeminist notions.

Chronologically if we talk about the ancient classics, ecocultural elements are found in the works of Thomas Lodge's *Rosalynde* and Shakespeare's *As you like it*. The conventional pastoral elements especially the elements of atmosphere is shown in the drama *As you like it*. Even the characters of Touchstone, Audrey, Jaques and Rosalind were like the outcome of nature. They were the representatives of pastoral element in the drama. The forest of Arden was the embodiment of romance. Rosalind's true love and sincerity were like nature's constant duties and selfless love towards humankind. This way, cultural elements are not now in the field of ecocriticism. Same is found in novel *The Hero's walk*. The cultural difference between India and Canada are strikingly coming out when there's a description of Ammaya's habit of gathering up the old things. She had gathered all the wastage things including her daughter Putty. Putty became ferocious by having such a thought. The sort of things, Ammaya gathered which were reused in other ways like curtains, dusters, petticoats, shopping-bags and table cloths, shows the ecological concern. This ecological care and concern displays how Indian human populations adapt to their environment and maintain eco-systems. Puttin thought that computers, cars, telephones all to speed up the life. There are some intext lines,

Why did people need to hurry all the time? Where were they going so quickly except to the end of their lives, a destination that was common to all living things?(Badami,81)

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