

## ECCENTRICITY OF ECOFEMINISM IN THE SELECT NOVELS OF VIRGINIA WOOLF AND ANITA DESAI

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**Abstract:** This paper sheds light on a short biography of two indefatigable ecofeminists Virginia Woolf and Anita Desai and introduces the core subject. These authors are influenced by the green fuse and ecofeminism perception. Their novels are not only providing us great pleasure in evoking all our five senses, but also induce our spirit to safeguard the nature of our forthcoming generations. Centering the viewer's attention on the green philosophy of life, they lead their audience to believe that nature as the relieving tool to resolve all the wounds and capture all the things in a sort of good old memories. Their novels are portraits of nature with minute observance.

**Keywords:** green fuse, ecofeminism, nature, green philosophy.

**Introduction:** Nature is the man's paramount companion. It provides priceless comfort to the society. Women are associated with the nature of primordial classical mythology. They have actively taken steps to control the full blown impact of climatic change over nature. Nature is feminized because it possesses the qualities of women. The crusade of Ecofeminism links the philosophy of feminism with ecology. The term coined by the French writer Françoise d'Eaubonne in the year 1974. This philosophy intertwines the abuse and dominance of women with that of the environment.

Ecofeminism finds its voice fairly in this universe as early as a species. In ancient times we accept nature with cooperation without any competition. Early archaeological discoveries found out that Mesopotamian civilization has an array of proof that ancient people who follow egalitarian lifestyle who are always united with nature. In early 1970's environmentalists are not paying much attention to feminism, women, animals and ecology. It has been identified with the broadened methodology as Meta feminism. Then, with the kaleidoscopic view ecofeminism embraces different forms of coercion, exigent racism, classism, imperialism, ableism, ageism and anthropocentrism.

Alienated from male-centered hierarchy women seek consolation from the nature based spirituality. To attain these idiosyncratic interdisciplinary looms, politics and spirituality pay most alluring features. Most of the ecofeminist would agree that there is a close relationship with the domination of nature over women. Mother earth's violence entangled with the emergence of controlling women. Our mother earth is discombobulated by the origin of patriarchal ideology. Ecofeminism broadly categorised into two distinct schools Radical ecofeminism and Cultural ecofeminism. Radical ecofeminist condemns the humiliation of patriarchal society for using women and nature for cheap resources and demolished the negative ideas over them. Cultural ecofeminist encouraged the association of women over

environment. Women have a close relationship with nature by their biological and gender roles. She is the family nurturer and sole creator of the universe. Women have close connections with the natural world. The spirituality of women and goodness of nature is entwined. Some ecofeminists not favoured the bifurcation and they got worried it may create stereotype exploitation may occur. Then some Western organizations supported vegetarianism, organic farming and adventurous by nature.

Virginia Woolf and Anita Desai are two contemporary writers who explore these ecofeminist traits in their works ingeniously. Though they belong to different ages and countries their thoughts have unique features. Their affirmation of the feminine subjective in both narratives is in constant opposition to the oppressive nature of the dominant patriarchy, on all levels of the treatise. Their novels' epilogues influence over relation to the narrative and the establishment of the ecofeminine subjective. The women's position and the state of the environment are epitomized on several levels, and the women seem to draw strength from their natural surroundings.

The present study is an attempt to examine the indispensable role of Virginia Woolf and Anita Desai in the field of socioeconomic Ecofeminism. Many writers depict the splendour of the nature as it is, but Woolf and Anita situate lofty in revealing the magnificence and the manifestation of women over nature through their characters like Mrs. Dalloway, Mrs. Ramsay, Sita, Raka and Nanda Kaul respectively. In Anita's *Where shall we go this summer*, Sita's daughter Menaga unknowingly plucked the buds, this incident cause greatly infuses on Sita and expresses that unknown destruction of the nature is the greatest threat to the society.

Virginia and Anita did not find feminism aesthetically acceptable and their concern is not with any movement but with womanhood as a whole. They vividly depict the landscape of their respective country. Virginia has a deep root in the classics of the

country. The English novel cannot be separated from its geographical context. In *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia glorified London as “glittering many pointed and many domed London” a splendid way.<sup>1</sup>

Virginia Woolf followed non-linear free form prose style which impressed many of her cohorts. Her mood smacks style and striking of dejection pictured in her novel. She committed suicide at the age of 59 in the year 1941. Her stream of consciousness and her urge to escape from the monotonous mundane world is expressed vividly in her novel. She wrote thirteen non-fiction books, four volumes of collected essays, she published three biographies, six short story collections, one drama, one translation, seven autobiographical writings and diaries, three bulk collections of her letters and best nine novels of hers. Virginia Woolf and Anita Desai share some common features in their select novels. I took Anita Desai's *Fire on the Mountain* and *Where shall we go this summer*, Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and *To the Lighthouse* for analysis. In all the four novels, the impact of nature and its effect on their women characters are revealed meritoriously. Their heroines are loved to be with nature and they tried to escape from the current busy schedule. They want to get solace from the nature. These novelists moved away from the noises, crowds, humdrum and traffic of cities towards solitude, silence, Nature of small Islands and landscapes of less- frequented hills and mountains. Virginia's most of the novels reveal herself as Eco Woolf. She dealt deeply with the Eco oriented atmosphere and she never left any minute details of the nature. Woolf reveals ecofeminism avowals through her characters. She powerfully used camera eye technique to sort out to visualise the naturalistic depiction prevailed in all the characters. She precedes the minuscule of depicting a domestic existence and universal implications of handling the problem. She takes time as the relieving tool to resolve all the wounds and capture all the things in a sort of good old memories. She gives the power of women who associates and evacuates depictions by the excellent portrayal of the healing all our reminiscence through nature.

Anita Desai, another invincible ecofeminist writer in this study is the omniscient narrator obtrudes the formal trend and her main theme on Ecofeminism flows on through the minds of the various characters. Her novels also never employ a story with an opening, middle and a close. She usually initiates her story in the centre and crafts disorder by striking out boldly up and down. She deals with the sensational and momentous, but with the ordinary experience of life. What she proceeds in her novels are juncture in the lives of their characters, united to each other by memories. Anita penned eighteen novels, within that more than eleven novels achieved different awards.

Her novel *Clear light of the day* and *Fasting, Feasting* are shortlist for the Booker prize. In 1983 she won the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize for the novel *The village by the Sea: an Indian family story*. In 1993 she received Neil Gunn Prize, in the year 2000 she acquired Alberto Moravia Prize for Literature (Italy) and she recently received her Padma Bhushan award in the year 2014. Her literary works proves her supreme attitude and deliberation to solve things in the midst of nature.

Anita Desai rides her novel as a jockey by having eco feminist persona in her hands and rides our mind like a horse who always obeys its master. We grasp the novel through her eyes. All our five senses arouse aesthetic by her vivid pictorial representation. We feel the nature and its presence right through her novel, we smell the sweet fragrance of the ripening fruits and honey crammed flowers, we hear the musical note of Bulbul in the forest lawn, we literally visualize the fire on the mountain and symbolically notice the fire in the eyes and minds of Ila Das, Nanda Kaul and even Raka, we also taste the delicious nectar overflowed from the ripen fruits and jam. The novel *Fire on the Mountain* is the visual packed treat for the readers who enjoy themselves in the midst of nature.

Anita Desai as an Indian luminary establishes her character Sita in different dimensions in the *Where Shall we go this summer* (1975). It is her fourth novel, which depicts the inner –outer world and fatigue for life. The novel narrates the story of the middle- aged Sita, who is fed up with the mundane routine of a meaningless existence. She feels suffocated in her well-ordered, posh flat in Mumbai and struggle hard to break away from it all. She wants to go back to island Manori where she had spent her golden days of childhood with her father to seek peace , pleasure and a great pause in her life. This novel is shorter in size, but deeper in meaning.

This elusive quality is a hallmark of Woolf's fiction, whose focus is on the inner experience of life. But this does not lead her to sacrifice the truth of life in favour of fantasy. She expresses the relationship of the mind with external facts. The works of Woolf, we find a mosaic of moments sewn together by memory the capricious seamstress. Woolf did not find feminism aesthetically acceptable and her concern is not with any movement, but with womanhood as a whole. Woolf vividly depicts the landscape of her respective country. She has a deep root in the classics of her country. The English novel cannot be separated from its geographical context. We 'glittering many pointed and many domed London' in her presentation. The resolute of eco-feminism is broadly interpreted in Anita Desai's (*Fire on the mountain- 1977*). She portrays women life is predisposed and totally integrated by nature. Nature

and women are always devouring unique familiarities and they are juxtapositional. Desai explains women, nature and their inner self are inseparable and she reveals in her novel women is the manifestation of nature. She depicts how nature is whittled and organized by culture and carnivals the culture of different people in different environments which are entirely different from each other. Desai illustrates Nanda Kaul, who is an Indian woman, believes and feels proud of her environmental culture with feminine sensibility. She demonstrates her character having strong hold over nature and compassion with culture.

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The structural pattern of the novel is strikingly similar to that of Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. The concrete form, the befitting style and economy detail make the work more curious. Similar to Woolf's novel, it has three parts Part one, Monsoon '67; Part two, Winter '47; Part three, Monsoon '67; each section of the novel is concerned with a particular season, time and space. The beginning section assimilates us on the island Manori and Manifests the present time life of Sita. The second section connects with the events of her past life and

the last section evinces what she has accepted as her fortune of future life.

I have indented to overarching the theme of this paper to be the way if we close with nature automatically it solves all our mental problems. It reduces our stress and dilemma and enables us to live in a comfort zone. Nature has all its power to cure all our physiological and psychological pain and make us to live peaceful stress free life. Being with nature is not the only solution to our present problem but if we, be with nature can save our earth and it protects us to suffocate from any outward and inward hazardous we are facing in life.

In *Mrs. Dalloway* Clarissa's character and Nanda Kaul's character in *Fire on the Mountain* shares more unique features. Both the characters have deep feelings towards nature and they find comfort in the midst of nature. They enjoy life in the company of nature and they feel nature is the best healer. It has the power to solve all our problems and rectify it with all its bounds. Without knowing its power we are playing with it. If we treated in a tender way nature behaves to us a nice mother and provide all comfort to us. But if we ill-treat it, its retaliation is more ferocious like a tsunami, earth quake and all kinds of natural disasters.

I will close by stating that the works of Desai and Woolf, we find a mosaic of moments sewn together by memory the capricious seamstress. Both the writers did not find feminism aesthetically acceptable and their concern, it is not with any movement but with womanhood as a whole. These authors vividly depict their landscape of their respective country. They have a deep root in the classics of their country. Thus, their novel echoes the nature of man and Nature itself disappearing in a Wordsworthian communion.

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