

## **An Eco-feministic Perspective on Women and Nature in Sarah Joseph's *Gift in Green***

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**Abstract:** This paper highlights the difficulties that women encounter worldwide and demonstrate their rage, fear and obligation to protect the environment and avoid the devastation. Sara Joseph discusses every relevant topic regarding the devastation of the natural world in *Gift in Green*. It portrays the problems and anxieties of a group of people living in a made-up town named Aathi. This novel depicts the construction of development projects and the expansion of the land's resources transforming its farmlands into artificial lands and female characters are very much attached to farming, fishing and cultivation their attachment to Mother Earth is strong.

**Keywords:** Ecofeminism, Nature Women Destruction, Environment, Power.

Eco feminism is a concept that opposes the exploitation of nature and patriarchal oppression as well as a strange combination of ecology and feminism. Francoise d' Eaubonne first used the term in the book called *Le feminisme ou la Mort* 1974. Women are more protective as well as more concerned with the land and her surroundings since they are motivated by feelings of love and compassion. The lives of women in society have been severely impacted by industrialization. Authors like Kaveri Nambisan and Sarah Joseph addresses women's different experiences in a world controlled by men as well as their struggles against environmental issues. She brings attention to the complex nature of women's relationships with their surroundings.

The term "Ecofeminism" refers to feminist and women's views on the environment, it is a feminist approach to environmentalism, recognizing the interconnected struggles of women and the environment especially with limited resources. *Gift in Green*, a novel originally penned in Malayalam, presents a captivating narrative that delves into the disruption of a community's symbiotic bond with their environment. Water serves as the overarching metaphor for life, symbolizing the intricate connection between the people of Aathi and their surroundings. The story unfolds in Aathi, where the inhabitants live in harmony with nature, relying on water for their survival and livelihood. However, this delicate balance is threatened by Kumaran, a proponent of progress who seeks to abandon the traditional water-life, pushing the community towards a dystopian future.

Through this narrative, the author masterfully explores themes of attachment, abandonment, darkness, and light, highlighting the struggle between predatory progress and the resilience of life. The novel showcases the author's unwavering faith in nature's resilience and the futility of attempting to control something as fluid and eternal as water-life. The story oscillates between despair and hope, ultimately suggesting that even in the face of destruction, there lies the possibility of a new beginning. *Gift in Green* is a landmark novel in Indian literature, marking a significant milestone as the first regional language novel to be translated and published concurrently in English. This remarkable achievement underscores the author's ability to transcend linguistic and cultural boundaries, sharing a powerful story with a broader audience.

The author's use of water as a metaphor for life is a striking aspect of the narrative, mirroring the degradation of society and the consequences of exploiting nature. This potent symbol serves as a reminder of the intricate relationships between humans, nature, and the world around them. The novel is a poignant exploration of the human condition, grappling with the consequences of progress and the importance of preserving traditional ways of life. Through its exploration of the tensions between progress and tradition, *Gift in Green* presents a nuanced and thought-provoking perspective on the human condition. The novel's

portrayal of a community's struggle to preserve their way of life is a powerful reminder of the importance of cultural heritage and the need to balance progress with preservation.

The author's masterful storytelling and lyrical prose make *Gift in Green* a standout work of Indian literature. The novel's exploration of eco-spiritual themes is deeply rooted in the cultural context of Aathi, where the women such as Shailaja as well as Kunjmathu are significant to the harmony act as the protectors of the ecological and spiritual integrity of Aathi. They resist the desacralization of nature carried out by capitalist powers.

Shailaja tries her hardest to protect the life forms in the water from contamination this represents her role of spiritual guardian of nature. The storytelling carried out by Kunjmathu's weaves about the myths and the origins of Aathi. The water life is portrayed as a gift from the divine goes in line with eco-spiritual.

The contrast between Aathi's sacred harmony and Kumaran's commercial ventures highlights the eco-spiritual critique of patriarchal exploitation, which violates the Earth's sanctity. By positioning Aathi as a site of resistance, the novel underscores the eco-spiritual belief that marginalized communities, particularly women, can lead the way toward a sacred, sustainable future.

*Gift in Green* is a powerful and thought-provoking novel that challenges readers to reflect on their relationship with nature and the consequences of their actions. The author's unconventional narrative style and exploration of complex themes make this novel a compelling read. The story is a testament to the enduring power of life and nature, offering a message of hope and resilience in the face of adversity. Ultimately, *Gift in Green* is a call to action, inviting readers to join the struggle for ecological and spiritual justice, and to work towards a world where nature is revered and protected. The novel's powerful narrative and eco-spiritual vision make it a compelling read for anyone concerned about the future of the planet and the well-being of all living beings.

The novel's exploration of the tensions between progress and tradition, and its poignant portrayal of a community's struggle to preserve their way of life, make it a significant contribution to the literary landscape. *Gift in Green* is a novel that will resonate with readers long after the story has ended, offering a message of hope and resilience in the face of adversity.

In the context of Indian literature, *Gift in Green* is a groundbreaking work that showcases the author's unique voice and perspective. The novel's exploration of eco-spiritual themes and its commitment to ecological justice make it a significant contribution to the literary landscape. Being a work of Indian writing in English the novel *Gift in Green*.

The novel's use of water as a metaphor for life is a powerful symbol that resonates deeply with readers. The author's masterful storytelling and lyrical prose make *Gift in Green* a standout work of Indian literature, one that will be remembered for years to come. *Gift in Green* is a novel that challenges readers to think critically about their relationship with nature and the consequences of their actions. The author's exploration of eco-spiritual themes and its commitment to ecological justice make it a significant contribution to contemporary debates on sustainability and environmental activism.

Through its exploration of the intricate relationships between humans, nature, and the world around them, *Gift in Green* provides a nuanced and thought-provoking perspective on the human condition. The novel's powerful narrative and eco-spiritual vision make it a compelling read for anyone concerned about the future of the planet and the well-being of all living beings.

This novel marks a significant milestone in Indian literature, being the first instance of a regional language novel being translated and published concurrently in English. The author's use of water as a metaphor for life is a striking aspect of the narrative, mirroring the degradation of society and the consequences of exploiting nature. The novel is a poignant exploration of the human condition, grappling with the consequences of progress and the importance of preserving traditional ways of life.

Kunjmathu's storytelling portrays Aathi's origins as a divine gift, emphasizing the sacred connection between water and life. This narrative echoes Starhawk's eco-spiritual rituals, which promote reverence for the Earth. In contrast, Kumaran's commercial ventures represent a patriarchal exploitation of nature, violating the Earth's sanctity (Berry 100). Aathi's sacred harmony with nature highlights the need for an

eco-spiritual approach, recognizing the Earth's inherent value. The novel suggests that marginalized communities, like Aathi's, can lead the way towards a more sustainable and sacred future.

The novel's use of water as a metaphor for life also raises important questions about the human relationship with the natural world, and the consequences of exploiting the environment. As the story unfolds, the reader is left to ponder the importance of preserving traditional ways of life, and the role that nature plays in shaping our understanding of ourselves and our place in the world. Ultimately, *Gift in Green* is a novel that will leave readers with a deeper appreciation for the natural world, and a renewed sense of hope for the future. In *Gift in Green* Kumaran is a violent male character. He is an arrogant businessman who is more concerned with turning Aathi into a "township crackling with industry" (Joseph 156). He left the Aathi way of life behind in search of a prosperous life outside. After Thirsty-six years, he returns to Aathi as a wealthy man, but he finds it difficult to fit in. Kumaran wants to turn Aathi into a modern-day paradise.

The Process of introducing modernity destroyed the Aathi people's agricultural lifestyle and resulted in violence against Kunjimathu a kind and compassionate woman. The businessman called Kumaran starts to invest in the area's development. He replaces Aathi's natural life with buildings. The village has entirely transformed into the modern world.

Aathi is a home for those who want to escape from their problems. The people one who lived in Aathi are very much attached to them with nature easily. They cultivate spinach, pumpkins, beans, white gourds and Paddy. They worship at the Thampuran shrine, which is situated within a forest. The women farmed fish in the lake as another source of income once the Paddy planting was completed. The people of Aathi can live a healthy and tranquil life which was supported by the pure water surrounding them once Kumaran and his friends entered Into Aathi the water becomes contaminated. Under the travesty of development and modernization they completely contaminated the environment of Aathi.

Kunjimathu starts to cry over the loss of the natural world. Suddenly she prays to God Thampuran in a heartbroken state of mind, at that time she sees a vision of an empty future empty of water. She saw the entire village's wealth being destroyed one by one in that vision. The land lay in ruins, a barren wasteland of dried-up paddy fields and shrivelled trees, their branches reaching up like bony hands. The earth was parched and cracked, the wells that once brought life now empty, leaving the cattle suffering from thirst. The birds' songs were silenced, and they perched quietly, while children cried out in hunger, their wails echoing across the desolate landscape. Fierce desert storms swept through, choking the land with burning sand, burying everything in its path. Rocks glowed like hot coals, and thorny bushes stood guard over the emptiness. The air was thick with heat, but the nights brought a biting cold that seemed to cut through everything, a harsh reminder of the land's devastation.

Joseph depicts the ways in which female characters in *Gift in Green* fight against violence by male characters for the sake of growth. It also highlights the importance of giving power of women to safeguard the land they live on. Women and nature had a close bond from the beginning of life itself. Therefore, Ecofeminism analyses the relationship that exists between women and ecology. It is a movement that tackles problems including pollution of the environment as well as inequalities between men and women. This political ideology combines feminist environmental concerns with opposition to male dominance.

Sarah Joseph's *Gift in Green* is a powerful eco-spiritual novel that critiques nature's desecralization and advocates for ecological restoration. Through Aathi's women and the metaphor of water-life, Joseph presents a vision of resistance against nature's exploitation, engaging with indigenous spiritualities and activism. The novel highlights the interconnectedness of humans and nature, challenging anthropocentrism and capitalist exploitation. With its lyrical narrative and mythical setting, *Gift in Green* invites readers to reimagine their relationship with the environment, fostering hope and resilience in the face of ecological crises. As a seminal work of eco-literature, it enriches Indian literary traditions and resonates with global calls for sustainability and spiritual renewal.

The novel's eco-spiritual narrative is a testament to Joseph's legacy, issuing a call for a sacred and sustainable future where reverence for the Earth and justice for its guardians are intertwined. *Gift in Green* is a masterful synthesis of eco-spiritual undertones and eco-conscious sensibilities, offering a

transformative vision of human-nature interconnectedness. Its profound reverence for water, resistance to anthropocentrism, and ecofeminist guardianship make it a vital text for our times, advocating unequivocally for ecological justice.

Joseph's nuanced portrayal of Aathi's women as courageous guardians of nature and water underscores the intricate intersections of gender, culture, and ecology, highlighting the pivotal role women play in preserving traditional ways of life and resisting exploitation. The water-life metaphor emerges as a powerful symbol of the community's symbiotic connection to nature, emphasizing the imperative of preserving ecological balance in the face of destructive progress.

The novel delivers a searing critique of capitalist exploitation and anthropocentrism, advocating for a paradigmatic shift towards eco-centric values and sustainable living. Through its luminous exploration of eco-spiritual themes, *Gift in Green* encourages readers to recalibrate their relationship with nature, recognizing the intrinsic value of the natural world and our place within it. As a poignant and thought-provoking work, *Gift in Green* offers a message of hope and resilience, urging readers to strive towards a future where human and ecological well-being are inextricably linked.

The novel's exploration of eco-spiritual principles and its unwavering commitment to ecological justice render it a significant contribution to contemporary debates on sustainability and environmental activism. Ultimately, *Gift in Green* is a clarifying call to action, inviting readers to join the struggle for ecological and spiritual justice, and to work collectively towards a world where nature is revered, protected, and cherished.

The novel's powerful narrative and eco-spiritual vision make it a compelling read for anyone concerned about the future of the planet and the well-being of all living beings. Joseph is very clear to connect between nature and the woman who lived in Aathi village she seems to be demanding nature to provide them with clean water so they can survive

Joseph's words beautifully portray the special bond between women and environment. The approaching rape of the land is symbolized by the women's rape. The poverty and the shame experienced by exploited women and land are same. *Gift in Green* explores the issues of ecofeminism how environmental exploitation and women's oppression are related. Nature must be protected and safeguarded. Women are kind and loving by nature. They are more loving, devoted and caring than destructive, which makes them more productive. Most men are destructive by nature. They are less loving caring and understanding.

In conclusion, *Gift in Green* is a landmark novel that marks a significant milestone in Indian literature. The author's masterful storytelling and lyrical prose make it a standout work of Indian literature, one that will resonate with readers long after the story has ended. The novel's exploration of eco-spiritual themes and its commitment to ecological justice make it a significant contribution to contemporary debates on sustainability and environmental activism.

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