

Tribhuvan University

Predicament of Non-human Being: An Ecofeminist Study of R. K. Narayan's

A Tiger for Malgudi

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by

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Letter of Recommendation

Mrs. Jiban Kumari Bhusal has completed her thesis entitled “Predicament of Non-human Being: An Ecofeminist Study of R. K. Narayan's *A Tiger for Malgudi*” under my supervision. She carried out her research from 2067/04/17 B.S. to 2067/08/8 B.S. I hereby recommend her thesis be submitted for viva voice.

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Abstract

This present research work studies Narayan's *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983) from the ecofeminist perspective as he has stressed on the moral and spiritual need to protect animals who have been subjugated just like women in patriarchal society. The novel shows the exploitation of animals without understanding their sufferings at the hands of man, which is shown through the tiger, Raja. Narayan shows his concern for the tiger as a female, which is given physical and mental torture in the circus--symbol of confinement-- in the course of training. This act is against the natural and moral law as it damages animal-human ecology and limits the rights of other creatures to live freely in the environment. The imagery of tiger's enslavement and confinement in the cage and subsequent torture in the circus cage at the hand of male hunters and circus masters symbolizes the same predicament of the non-human beings and women in patriarchal society.

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1. An Introduction to Ecocritical Theory

This research work studies R. K. Narayan's *A Tiger for Malgudi* (1983) from the perspective of ecofeminism. It examines ecology with a feminist concern as the novel relates the story of enslavement of the tiger by a circus owner and its subsequent torture at the hand of circus owner who is of course male. It cannot live freely in a natural environment in the wild jungles. He mates and has a cub with a tigress, and raises the cub until one day he finds that hunters have captured and killed his entire family. He embarks on revenge by attacking and eating the cattle and livestock of nearby villages, but is captured by poachers. He is sent to a zoo in Malgudi, where a harsh animal trainer known only as "the Captain" starves him and forces him to do tricks in the circus in the course of training. It lives in captivity for long time before it escapes and even kills the Captain.

The novel *A Tiger for Malgudi* makes abundant use of images of confinement of the tiger which shows the enslavement and exploitation of animals without understanding their sufferings at the hands of males. The tiger is given physical and mental torture in course of training in the circus. This resembles the plight of women as they are made to work as slaves and exploited for the benefit of males in patriarchal society. This act is against the natural and moral and humanitarian law as it damages animal-human ecology.

The imagery of tiger's enslavement and confinement in the cage and subsequent torture in the circus cage at the hand of male hunters and circus masters symbolizes the same predicament of the non-human beings and women in patriarchal society. The tiger in the text is captured, enslaved and tortured as females are meted out the same treatment in patriarchal society in India. As the novel reflects a strong protest against natural disintegration and imbalance, the study delimits itself to

critique the dominating legacy of human beings permutated by the ruling class male Indians who subordinate exploit non-human world as females.

This study makes a significant contribution in the area of ecology. Firstly this research foregrounds the marginalized and subordinated non-human being tiger, which is othured and exploited for the benefit of others as females have been suffering the same fate under patriarchy characters by bringing them into the frame of critical analysis. Second, this research makes a significant theoretical amalgamation of feminist critique on patriarchy in order to demonstrate the subordination of females in the aspect of class vis-à-vis nature in Indian context.

Nature, Ecocriticism and Literature

As the natural world is being gradually destroyed because of the human activities, ecocritical theory advocated for its conservation. Generally, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the natural environment. The issue of the ecocritical emergence is quite recent as ecocriticism was officially heralded by the publication of two seminal works, both published in 1996: *The Ecocriticism Reader* edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, and *Environmental Imagination*, by Lawrence Buell. Indeed, even the term “ecocriticism” can be dated to the late 1970s.

Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm note that ecocritics ask a range of questions such as “How is nature represented in the sonnet? What role does the physical setting play in the plot of the novel” (xix)? More theoretically, ecocritics might ask, “Do man write about nature differently than woman do? In what ways has literature itself affected human kind's relationship to the natural world” (xix)? Most importantly ecocriticism provides two critical components to the ecologically influenced literatures: first the inquiry as to whether, “In

addition to race, class, and place should become a new critical category” (xix) and second the notion that “all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world affecting it and affected by it” (xi).

Literature has always conditioned our philosophical understanding of nature. We have lots of literary texts where landscape and other non human animals play role as dominant characters. Many literary works make use of concrete physical images present in the echo-sphere like mountain-springs, lofty cliffs, quiet sky, rocks, woods as well as many animals such as birds, and other animals. These eco elements in literary works can give birth to the sense of kindness and love to the objects other than human. These presentations of humans associating with other nonhuman natural world, the communion between man and the physical ecosphere helps in understanding the harmonious relationship and co-existence of human as well as non human natural world. The proper roles of human in the cosmic scheme have always engaged the literary imaginations. Concerns about maintaining or restoring a right relationship to nature are both thematically and symbolically present in the literature of every culture. For example when *Oedipus Rex* opens with a plague upon land or *The Bible* begins with Adam and Eve's expulsion from the -garden of paradise or *The Divine Comedy*: starts with Dante lost in the rank wildness of the dark wood. We understand that the ethical propriety of individual action is metaphorically conceived of in terms of health and balance future.

Literature has always been concerned with the creation and recreation of a sense of place. For example Frost's “New England” and Faulkner's “Mississippi” are subjects rather than simply the setting of work. The nature in their work has

not been presented simply as mystic point of view. This powerful sense of emotional location is produced by a convergence of artistic and natural eco-sphere, a kind of literary bioregionalism in which the writer imaginatively re-inhabits a particular location member by many non-human elements. A great deal of Literature has dealt explicitly with nature whether to speculate upon our place with it or to explore and express its beauty irrespective to human concern. In the twentieth century, the most eloquent voices for an ecologically integrative vision of nature from literary artist as diverse as D.H. Lawrence, Aldons Huxley, John Muir, Edward Abbey, Philip Larkin and T. S. Eliot and many more.

In the early nineteenth century Romantic poets reflected organic naturalism and displayed the link among everything. They are always anti-mechanistic and think machines as an evil. The prime focus goes on holism based on ecological principle. For example “The Haunted Tree” by Wordsworth contains a vision of men and women living in harmony in an unspoiled nature. It is to all appearance an ecological poem because it discovers social community in a landscape of peace. The ground is not raped, the soil not exploited and neither are people who live close to it. And this balance between humans and the natural environment that they are nurtured is explicitly opposed to other exploitative kind of relationship both within human society and nature.

Similarly, most of the works of romantic poets conceive nature as a body of content, an educational guide and more enshrining moral and spiritual purpose. Their works are suffused with the book of nature. There is articulation of vivid sense of particular places and their beauties and the privilege of profound sense experiencing life in the harmony of natural surrounding.

But so far as the critical studies on such literary text is concerned, until very recently there has been no sign that the institution of literary studies has even been aware of the ecological concern in literature. They lack the earthiness approach on the study of literary text. In some quarters there have been some changes on emphasis, starting in America and currently taking a firm hold in Europe, named 'Ecocriticism.' The first law of ecology is that "everything is connected to everything else" (qtd. in Glotfelty xix). Everything in the world is interconnected. Ecocriticism is an ecological approach on the study of the relationship between literature and ecology. Acknowledging language and literature as vital aspects of a culture and acknowledging human culture's connection with the physical world acted upon' it and affected by it.

Ecocriticism is the study of literature that is connected with the relationship between human and the natural world. It studies the reciprocal relationship between human being and land considering land not just as the stage upon which human story is acted out but as an actor in the drama. The home ground of ecocriticism is the human's inseparable attachment with the soil in its existence. The relationship between human and non-human world is the primary focus of ecocritical studies. In the 1996 collection *The Eco-Criticism Reader* Glotfelty and Harold Forms posit:

Eco criticism is the study of relationship between literatures and physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism beings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to it reading of text, eco-criticism takes an earth centered approach to literacy studies. (xviii)

Ecocritics and theorists are concerned with the questions like how nature is represented in literature and what role the physical setting plays in the plot of this novel. They see whether the values expressed in the text is in consistent with ecological wisdom or not. They examine the metaphors of the land used in the text. As the environmental crisis is deepening by the day, it is seeping into contemporary literature and popular culture. In this way, the science of ecology has a great significance.

To negotiate between human and non-human world, ecocriticism “puts one foot on literature and other on land” (Glotfelty-xix). For a long time the focus of literary studies has been on the world of word. Literary theory in general examines the relations between writers, text and the world. In most literary theory 'the world' is synonymous with society or the social sphere. Ecocriticism expands the notion of ‘the world’ to include the entire eco-sphere. It gives the earthiness approach to the text. As on earth centered approach ecocriticism assumes that no thought, no philosophy, no theory or culture predates the earth. It embraces the notion that language, thought and knowledge begin and end with the earth. Man is of the earth and earthly. Earth is a part of man itself. On the Vedic attitude of relation between man and earth Raimondo Panikkar writes:

In *Vedic* attitude towards the earth springs from mankind's primordial experience of being on the one hand a guest and the other an offspring of Earth. The earth is undoubtedly mother and close to man. But at the same time she is alien, other and aloof. The earth is the foundation of, the basis out of which emerges all that exist on which everything rests. The earth is the basis of life.

Man is of the earth and earthly but the earth is not simply nature, is not merely geographical or material; it is part of man himself, so that man can no more live without earth than he can live without a body. (120)

Ecocritical studies embrace the opinion that no branch of knowledge can ever be devoid of eco-centric implication. Every knowledge follows the earth; nothing can be understood in the absence of any spatial or temporal point of reference. Due to this, ecocriticism establishes the earth as crucial object for the understanding of ethics and religion, art and literature, philosophy and physics, culture and politics and all other disciplines. Similarly ecocriticism assumes that language evolves out of the same evolutionary process of the earth. Language cannot be separated from eco-sphere. They are completely interconnected. Language is not the representation of the world but it functions within our experience of the world. So it studies the interconnectedness between language and landscape, text and terrain, words and words. These interconnectedness help ecocriticism see a single life within unity in life. All the natural things man-animal, plant and other physical events have cosmic unity, which we call life. As a distinctive approach to the practice of literary criticism, ecocriticism gives increased attention to the literacy representation of nature and is sensitive to interdependencies that ground the author, character and work in a natural system. When we study the relationship between literature and landscape, human and non-human animal world, we are not studying two separate things but interdependencies. The lives on earth are connected with each other and all wholly dependent upon such basic natural elements for their survival sunlight, water and air. This ecological approach claims that even study is meaningless

unless it highlights the relationship between biotic and abiotic constituents of earth. On the other hand, this new criticism is a call for cultural change. Ecocriticism is not just a means of analyzing nature in literature. It implies a move towards a more biocentric worldview, an extension of ethics, a broadening of human's conceptions of global community to include non-human life form and the physical environment.

Ecocriticism is marked by a tremendously ambitious intellectual ethical, political, and even spiritual agenda. It aims at the transformation of human environmental and ecological consciousness. Western imagination – man a little lower than the angels but well above the rest of earthly creation, imposing rational design to improve his earthly habitat – toward a newly emerging ecocentric paradigm, with its deeper respect for the integrity of many other forms of life with which humankind shares the earth. Unsurprisingly, this agenda has located ecocriticism beyond the traditional boundaries of literary studies. (Levin 1098).

Ecocriticism, in some ways, is similar to the new cultural geography but lays greater emphasis on the biological processes and relations that precede and contribute to the socio cultural production of space. By and large, ecocritics tend to believe that a scientifically informed appreciation of these processes can help restore a harmonious balance between nature and human culture. Ecological reading helps to establish a culture, to respect the non-human world. If the interconnectedness between human and non-human members is understood, it in many ways can heal the environmental wound human have inflicted upon it. American historian David Worster contends that:

We are facing a global crisis today, not because of how our ecosystem-function our ethical systems function. Getting through the crisis requires understanding our impact on nature as precisely as possible, but even more, it requires understanding those ethical system and using that understanding to reform them. (qtd. in Glotfelty and Fromm xxi)

Ecocriticism is a response to the need of for humanistic understanding for our relationship with the natural world in an age of environmental destruction. In large part, environmental crisis is a result of humanities' disconnectedness from the natural world, brought about not only by increasing technology but also by particularization that fails to understand the interconnectedness among living and even non-living things. The agenda posed by the ecocriticism has located ecocriticism beyond the traditional boundaries of literary studies and they are hopeful that such study can help to result a harmonious balance between nature and human.

On the one hand, ecocriticism looks at how text represents the physical world on the other hand, more importantly, it examines at how literature raises moral questions about human interaction with the nature. Most ecocritical works shares a common motivation: the awareness that we have reached the age of environmental limit, a time when the consequences of human actions are damaging the planet's basic life system. This awareness sparks a sincere desire to contribute environmental restoration. So, ecologically-focused criticism is a worthy practice to improve the degrading condition of the modern world. It ultimately helps to direct attention to the conservation of environment.

Ecocritics tend to believe that a considerable appreciation on nature can help to restore a harmonious balance between nature and human. They try to transform human environmental and ecological consciousness. So, they value the integrity and interconnectedness between all things. As a newly emerging field of study, there may be varied interpretation although it can touch virtually any discipline, when it is translated in to action, it generally comes back to its home ground; the human relationship with the earth and its other members who equally share it. It adds place to the category of race, class and gender used to analyze literature; it means looking at how text represent the physical world and how literature raises moral questions about human interaction with nature. A number of ecocritics say that ecocriticism represent a reaction to the heady theorizing of the 1980-90s. For a long time the focus of literary studies was a world on words. From the new critics who thought that text could be analyzed on their own terms.

Recent theories have argued that language accurately reflects the reality. Lawrence Buell says: “But now there is recoil: Ecocriticism assumes that there is an extra textual reality that impacts human beings and their artifacts and vice-versa” (1135). So, ecocriticism analyzes the ways in which literature represents the human relation to nature at particular moment of history; and what values we assign to nature shape literary troops and genres. In turn, it examines how such literary figures contribute to shaping social and cultural attitudes towards the environment.

Literature Review of *A Tiger for Malgudi*

Like all other Malgudi novels, his novel *A Tiger for Malgudi* has elicited criticism from different critics from India and abroad. This novel is seen as a blend of myth and fable and to have belonged to the lore of *Panchatantra* – the Indian classic

by Vishnusarma. In this regard, A. Hariparsanna relates it to this mythical work as he says:

The *Panchatantra* is a unique source of instruction and concepts that true for all times and elements projecting the spirit and relating of its origin. Narayan, in *A Tiger for Malgudi*, follows the literary tradition of *Panchatantra* where animals act and behave as human beings being the protagonist. (156)

Similarly, regarding the animal imagery in the novel, another critic, Nagendra Nath Sharan says: “The novelist’s use of animal imagery seems an inner artistic purpose. The circus-life of the tiger symbolizes the active aspect of man’s life and later his peaceful life in zoo ending in peaceful death is like *Sanyas*, the last phase of human life” (291).

Narayan makes use of Indian legend and folktales to suggest that beasts may be as capable of thought and feeling as human beings. Narrated by a tiger, this novel traces “the animal’s spiritual development in overcoming its potential for violence” (Kaul 15). This shows animal transformation.

Although the critics have tried to analyze Narayan’s novels from various perspectives, they have not yet bothered to pay heed to the ecofeminist concern for cultivating humanist ethos towards animals. Hence, the present researcher seeks to examine the human-animal relationship from ecological perspective. In short, most of the critics have dealt with the idea of Narayan’s craftsmanship, autobiography, myth, and so on. But, nobody has yet made an adequate effort to study the text from the ecocritical and ethical perspective. It is one of the important aspects of the novel which the present researcher wants to research.

The study has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents an introductory outline of the research work – a short introduction to R.K. Narayan and his works, followed by a short critical response. The second chapter tries to briefly explain the theoretical modality that is applied in this research work. It discusses ecofeminist criticism with reference to animals in ecocriticism. It also briefly talks about the relationship between literature and ecology.

On the basis of the theoretical framework established in the second chapter, the third chapter analyzes the text at a considerable length. It analyzes how Narayan shows his concern for ecology with animals by exposing the cruel and sadistic nature of man who has subjugated animals just as women.

II. Ecofeminism and Representation of Animals

The concept of ecofeminism developed out of the women's movement and environmental movement in the 1970s. The term "ecofeminism" has been conceived as a "connection of the ecology and women" (Morgan 4). In general, ecofeminists believe that there are significant interconnections among the unjustified domination of women and the unjustified domination of the nature. Ecofeminism is the social movement that regards the oppression of women and nature as interconnected. It is one of the few movements and analyses that actually connect two movements.

Ecofeminism is a joining of environmental, feminist, and women's spirituality concerns (Spretnak 6). As the environmental movement along with environmental crises raised the consciousness of women to the decay of the earth, they began to see a parallel between the devaluation earth and the devaluation of women. Women began to see the link as not a false construction of weakness, but as a strong unifying force that clarified the violation of women and the earth as part of the same drama of male control.

Ecofeminists claim to be part of a distinct social movement. In a book on ecofeminism, *Reweaving the World: The Emergence of Ecofeminism* (1990), Diamond and Orenstein claim ecofeminism is a social movement and offer the book as a statement of its ideology (xiii). Many other contributors directly state that ecofeminism is a social movement and implicit in all the writings is the conception of ecofeminism as a social movement. Others outside ecofeminism also consider ecofeminism as a movement. Rush Limbaugh makes frequent disparaging comments about ecofeminists. In addition, academic writing, to this point, has influenced the status of ecofeminism as a movement.

However, others contend that ecofeminism has not yet developed into a social movement. Sale argues that it is "too early to speak of ecofeminism as a 'movement'" (302) and that it is best thought of less as a movement than a philosophy--or perhaps not movement at all, in the traditional sense, nor even some kind of "tendency" within a movement but rather a way of re-regarding the world that can be brought to bear on a whole variety of movements and tendencies. The traditional paradigm of social movements serves as the basis of this dispute.

One of the areas where ecofeminism is found lacking in the traditional paradigm of social movements is the area of action. The common view is that social movements engage in protest and direct action; however, ecofeminism calls for consciousness raising, healing, and a communion with nature. There is little direct action. Some call for concern and to be involved in crucial issues. Others call for intellectual work to form a holistic conception of ecofeminism. Furthermore, there is no group of ecofeminists, no declared leader, and no vague form of organized activity (other than a few intellectual conferences and books). A few organizations have included the word "ecofeminism" in their title, such as "Ecofeminists for Animal Rights," but they are not a subgroup of the larger Ecofeminist. In addition, most groups that can be identified as ecofeminist in nature do not identify themselves as ecofeminists.

Ecofeminists participate in the formation of ideology and recruitment in those conferences and books are explicitly for the development and spread of ecofeminist thought. The message has spread now as more and more people identify themselves with ecofeminism through conferences and articles and books on ecofeminist thought. But, ecofeminism has not resulted in collective action in the way other movements have. This issue is one that is shared by many environmental groups, and, through an

examination of ecofeminism, new ways of thinking about other such groups can also be pursued.

More recently, ecofeminist theorists have extended their analysis to consider the interconnection between sexism, the domination of nature including animals and also racism and social inequalities. Consequently, it is now better understood as a movement working against the interconnected oppressions of gender, race, class and nature. Karen Warren writes, “Eco-feminists take as their central project the unpacking of the connections between the twins oppressions of women and nature” (15). But evaluations of ecofeminism’s critical successes have been profoundly mixed:

Ecofeminism is a very important, energetic, and real social movement. I feel allied to it in many crucial ways-both as a critical project and in an emotional kind of way...I think that ecofeminism, and the conceptions of nature being developed within this broad and complicated term, makes sense in a world under particular kinds of threats. (23)

In such a way, ecofeminism would draw on the best of social theory and bond it with radical concepts in ecology to produce a genuinely anti-hierarchical, enlightened, and broadly oppositional movement, one that could oppose sexism and the many forces that are at the work in destroying the biosphere and trammeling human freedom. Recent ecofeminist literature does not fulfill this promise at all.

Ecofeminist theory creates progressive dialogue which plays an important role in broadening the policy agenda of non-governmental and

governmental institutions, reframes environmental issue to recognize gender implication, and questions the structure of the decision-making body.

Ecofeminism has become a movement and a theory capable of eliciting a broad range of responses. To some, it is vital, creative, and integrative, it is capable of confronting a wide range of social and environmental problems and offers a profound challenge to contemporary relations in which women and nature find themselves similarly, and relatedly, oppressed. To others, it is “dead in the water”: reactionary, divisive, even destructive. To many of its advocates, ecofeminism is seen as an innovative response to contemporary relations of domination, a force with which to negotiate a new era of gendered and natured relations. To many of its critics, ecofeminism is seen as reinforcing, or even reproducing, the types of domination against which it purportedly struggles.

Of course, in its often noted diversity, ecofeminism contain all of these things at once: it is simultaneously innovative and reactionary, energetic and moribund. Paradoxical as this characterization may appear at first glance, it is both possible and necessary to identify the element or moment of ecofeminist politics that should “die a quite death” and to rescue from their ashes the promise of ecofeminism. Broadly speaking, ecofeminism is a movement and a current of analysis that attempts to link feminist struggle with ecological struggles, the range of possibilities within this general mandate is, therefore, considerable. There is much to be said in favore of ecofeminism’s enunciation of gendered relations to nature. Not only is nature an important moment in feminist discourse, but gender is an important element in the social and political creation of nature. To understand the ways in which nature and

gender are wielded as discursive construct, to investigate the ways in which the oppression of women and the domination of nature are imbricated in a whole host of destructive relations and practices, and to create an oppositional framework capable of addressing their interrelations, it seems vital to explore the connections that ecofeminists examine between women / feminism and nature / ecology. But these insights need to be unpacked from the considerable baggage that ecofeminism tends to carry. In large part, this baggage persists because ecofeminist have been less than vigilant in their questioning of the gender and nature assumptions that are fundamental to the western discursive landscape and that appear so unproblematically in motherhood environmentalism. Heroic mothers defending home and hearth against a nature deformed by multinationalist corporate practice may be a compelling story, but it is not the stuff of which good feminist or ecological critique is necessarily born. In this particular narrative, part of what is missing is, in Lee Quinby's terms, the interrogative element, an insistence on problematizing the whole ensemble of discursive relations that surrounds the phenomenon in question . Also crucially missing is the democratic element, an insistence on bringing to public debate and contests precisely these discursive relations in the hope of sloughing off their skin of naturalness.

It is not surprising that many feminists regard with some suspicion the view expressed by a growing number of women who describe themselves as 'ecofeminists': that there may be something to be said in favor of women's connectedness with nature. The very idea of a feminine connection with nature seems to many to be regressive and insulting, summoning up images of women as earth mothers, as passive, reproductive animals, contented cows immersed

in the body and in the unreflective experiencing of life. It is both tempting and common therefore for feminists to view the traditional connection between women and nature as no more than instrument of oppression, a relic of patriarchy which should simply be allowed to wither away now that its roots and oppressive tradition are exposed. The inferiorisation human qualities and aspects of life associated with necessity, nature as the pre-symbolic, of nature-as-primitive, of nature – as-animal and of nature as the feminine- continues to operate to the disadvantage of women, nature and the quality of human life. The connection between women and nature and their mutual inferiorisation is by no means a thing of the past and continuous to drive, for example, the denial of women's activity and indeed of the whole sphere of reproduction.

Representation of Animals

Scholarly interest in animals has remained on the fringes of ecocritical writing, as the mainstream have preferred instead to continue to pursue one of the inaugural goals of ecocriticism – namely, of recouping professional dignity for the “undervalued genre of nature writing” (Glotfelty xxxi). Theories from the fringes of mainstream contemporary ecocriticism – such as those of Randy Malamud, Barney Nelson, and the increasingly replaced by ecofeminist corpus – have, however, produced significant scholarly dialogue about connections between environmental and animal issues.

If we assume that ecocriticism is ethically committed to promoting the health of the biosphere of which we and other animals are a part, then the many uses to which people put nonhuman animals must surely be important, especially given the degree to which these uses impact negatively on the well-being of the biosphere. Statistics on one of these uses, meat production, for example, are

easily found showing that meat pollutes more, uses more resources, and causes more suffering in the world – not only in the form of pollution but in the form of extinctions – than non-meat-based diets. That is why, animals are an ecocritical issue.

What counts as ecocritical ethics that include animals is carefully explained in activist terms by Randy Malamud in *Poetic Animals and Animal Souls* under five general categories: such ethics, Malamud argues, should encourage people,

1) to see animals without hurting them; 2) to understand animals "in their own contexts, not in our contexts"; 3) to teach "about animals' habits, their lives, their emotions, their natures, as much as can be done from our limited and biased perspective"; 4) to advocate "respect for animals, on their own terms"; and 5) to develop "a culturally and ecologically complex, problematized vision of what an animal means" to replace definitions currently employed (44-45).

What is interesting here, though, is the absence of any mention of diet or clothes. Surely, it is in the clothes we wear and in the food we eat as we have our most immediate day-to-day contact with animals.

Humans, of course, are animals, and the distinction between human and animal is a false one, but obvious behavioural and physical differences between human and nonhuman animals compel the distinction. At the same time, though, we seek similarities, and anthropomorphism functions as a kind "of a perceptual strategy that is both involuntary and necessary" (Guthrie 51). Anthropomorphism is something we do and need to do whether we like it or not, something that is

guaranteed at the moment that human language is used, something that it is both inevitable and useful. Arguing for the inevitability of anthropomorphic language, however, assumes that language is uniformly, invariably, and inescapably anthropomorphic; yet, such an assumption seems wrong and is comparable in some ways to suggesting that sexist language is generally inescapable. The debate in ethology (the study of animal behaviour) on anthropomorphism – its meanings and implications – has run into volumes and volumes. The basic and broadly agreed upon definition of anthropomorphism is that it roughly describes the attribution of human psychological traits to nonhuman animals and things. Anthropomorphism is extremely useful as it transforms and transfigures our understanding of the animals being described. Malamud argues that it “promises to elevate the status of animals in general cultural regard” because it is less easy to tolerate the suffering of nonhuman animals when their emotions, intelligence, behaviour, and feelings seem to resemble our own (37-38).

Lorraine Daston and Greg Mitman eloquently explain that it seems impossible for any kind of anthropomorphism to escape the charge of anthropocentrism:

Considered from a moral standpoint, anthropomorphism sometimes seems dangerously allied to anthropocentrism: humans project their own thoughts and feelings onto other animal species because they egotistically believe themselves to be the center of the universe. (4)

This debate is central to ecocriticism. Leo Marx and Lawrence Buell have expressed their views against each other on this debate. Marx contends that people are “at the center of environmental thinking” and represent “the most

responsible agent of environmental devastation.” Sharon O’Dair summarizes her view on the situation nicely in her article “The Tempest as Tempest: Does Paul Mazursky ‘Green’ William Shakespeare?,” arguing that “the most significant theoretical and practical question facing contemporary ecocriticism, as well as contemporary environmentalism, is whether the movement should be, at base, ecocentric or anthropocentric: should protection of the environment be undertaken as a good in and of itself or should it be undertaken because of its use to humanity?” (116).

Of course, everything in the world is “nature,” from bird nests to pop bottles, but this does not mean that the distinction between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism just dissolves. Gabriel Egan argues very convincingly for the importance of retaining the distinction between “human” and Nature: “If everything is nature [. . .], then nothing is, for the word has nothing from which to distinguish itself” (130). The distinction enables discussion of ecocentric actions (those that give priority to the nonhuman environment), performed from clearly and ineluctably anthropocentric positions. It is difficult to imagine arguing from any but anthropocentric positions. As long as we distinguish between human and nonhuman natures, the distinction between anthropocentrism and ecocentrism remains valid and useful.

In early modern England, there were huge efforts underway to define humanity, and, of course, nonhuman animals were the first line of attack. Erica Fudge, in fact, maintains that the anthropocentrism implicit in the very act of attacking animals is evidence of anthropomorphism because it tacitly concedes its objects are able to feel pain as humans do: “Baiting is the most explicit and

spectacular site of anthropocentrism in the early modern period, but it is also the most explicit and spectacular site of humanity's confusion about itself" (19).

Perhaps one of the reasons animals have largely been left out of the kinds of environmental discussions ecocritics have had is that they are, for many people, food and clothing objects. If this is true, if one of the reasons ecocriticism has been slow to discuss animals is that they are useful objects, then it is also equally true that animals function less as objects, function very differently in the environmental imagination than rivers and mountains and life forms less sentient than animals such as trees. Animals are less static or are imagined to be less so than most non-animal life and are therefore less fixed features of relatively static imagined environments. In this sense, animals are outside of the environment – or are imagined to be so – and are also often therefore outside of discourses about the environment.

Ecocriticism is increasingly clear about its intentions, and when we include animals in ecocritical discussions, the activist intentions suggest several things. From an ecocritical stance, scholarly work that looks at themes and counts image clusters is certainly useful concordance work, but it is unlikely to do very much actually to make the world a better place. Similarly, scholarly work that observes matters of metaphor, while very likely to offer interesting takes on a given author's artistic dexterity, seems very unlikely to do much in the real world-and for the purposes of this paper, this researcher is assuming that there is a real world and that David Mazel leads us away from practical effectiveness in representing "the environment as a discursive construction" (xii); if the purposes are to effect real world changes through scholarly discussions rather than to engage in varieties of intellectual masturbation, then

analyses of "animals" must ask broader questions and seek broader connections so that the results of our research might reach beyond an elite few.

Perhaps the most immediate question ecocriticism can ask is about how our assumptions about animals' impact on the natural environment. If we assume that it is wrong to systematically exploit and kill nonhuman animals, then the ethics and implications of distinguishing between domestic and wild animals need to be addressed. Barney Nelson's *The Wild and the Domestic*, which explicitly aligns itself with an ecocritical line, focuses precisely on this dichotomy, arguing it to be a false one: "the more one really knows domestic animals, the less domestic they seem" (24), Nelson maintains. Surprisingly, though, Nelson stakes her ground not to argue against using animals but to argue against a dichotomy that results in restrictions on ranges of foraging for animals being exploited for human uses. Nelson's *The Wild and the Domestic* needs to be taken to task for tacitly endorsing an ethics of exploitation. And more broadly speaking, ecocritics on the whole need to be taken to task for not looking at how the continued use of animals for food, entertainment, forced labour, and so on, figure into environmental discussions.

III. Predicament of Tiger: An Ecofeminist Study of *A Tiger for Malgudi*

As ecofeminism studies the subjugation of and between natural world and females, the main focus of this chapter is to relate the ecological concern of R.K. Narayan through his novel *A Tiger for Malgudi* in which he advocates the rights of subjugated and marginalized beings, tiger, which is exploited just like women in patriarchal society. This study helps us learn to respect the independent existence, unity and importance of all beings. He advocates the balanced and harmonious relationship among all the beings on the earth. All the natural living beings equally share the same chemical and biological elements and thus similarly share the emotions like pain, pleasure and happiness. The understanding of oneness among all the members of the earth is the main field of study of the ecocriticism. So, by depicting and denouncing the exploitation of animals through the tiger, Raja in this text, Narayan shows the predicament of non-human beings and human beings (women) thereby expressing his concern for the independent existence of all the animals that are integral part of this eco-system on the earth.

Narayan's Acceptance of the Tiger, Raja as a Being

When the novel begins, Narayan accepts the tiger as a being as he makes the novel move forward from the perspective of the tiger itself. The tiger itself narrates its own life story. It relates its pain, difficulties and happiness. The first sentence reads, "I have no idea of the extent of this zoo" (11). The tiger is kept at the zoo, an estrangement from its natural environment – the eco-system. The tiger has the very limited freedom of the movement in the zoo so it has "no idea of the extent of this zoo. I know only my corner and whatever passes before me" (11). As women enjoy very limited freedom within the four walls of the house,

the tiger in the cage meets the same fate. When Narayan writes about the tiger's feelings he shows the consciousness of the tiger as a being. The following narration of the tiger tells us how and in what condition it was brought into this zoo by man for the purpose of entertaining the visitors. However, Narayan shows his concern for the safety and the care of the tiger as he makes men in charge of zoo take extra caution in the treatment of tiger, Raja. The man says:

He is all right. Now run up and see if the end cage is ready. This animal is used to human company and a lot of free movement. We must keep him (the tiger) where people will be passing. The open air enclosure must also be available to him, when the wild ones are not let out. See to it. (11)

This shows that Narayan right from the very beginning of the novel, besides exposing the exploitation, advocates the independent existence of the tiger which is the most important creature of the ecosystem.

The tiger at the same time feels gratitude for the “special consideration” shown by some few men in the zoo as women are to men (11). But he craves for the ‘master’ who has treated him as a being. The ‘master’ here is described by Narayan as a man who really controls all the beings of the earth as women are controlled by their master--either fathers or husbands. The tiger expects people to exhibit a humane behaviour, but he feels sad when he examine “dull and monotonous faces” that stare at the tiger (11). It hurts to experience the inhuman treatment that is meted out to the tiger at the zoo. When the people make crude noises to rouse the tiger by calling it a “ferocious beast”, the tiger seems to respond in the following way:

You are not likely to understand that I am different from the tiger next door, that I possess a soul within this forbidding exterior. I can think, analyze, judge, remember, and do everything that you do, perhaps with greater subtlety and sense. I lack only the faculty of speech. (12)

Though some critics have tried to link this to spirituality as the tiger having possessed the soul, this study only emphasizes on the fact that the tiger is a being like a man and part of this ecosystem. He is the living being without whose presence this system begins to fall apart as the human world falls apart for lack of coordination between men and women. So, through this narration of the tiger Narayan invites people to understand and recognize the fact that animals are living beings like human beings and thus part of natural environment. And man should not exploit or torture them in any form and cost. The tiger urges the readers to read its thoughts and feelings, and listen to the story of its life. It tries to convince people that the outer feature of the tiger is not to be dreaded as each being is different from other being. At the same time, it also expresses its sorrows at the god's choice to make it in its present form. It says:

You are carried away by appearances – my claws and fangs and the glowing eyes frighten you no doubt. I don't blame you. I don't know why God has chosen to give us this fierce make-up, the same god who has created the parrot, the peacock and the deer, which inspire poets and painters. I would not blame you for keeping your distance- I myself shuddered at my own reflection on the still surface of a pond while crouching for a drink of water, not when I was really a wild beast, but after I came under the influence of my

master and learnt to question, 'who am I?'. Don't laugh within yourself to hear me speak thus. I will tell you about my master presently.' (12)

This also makes Raja nostalgic about his past life as he remembers his cub hood when he would enjoy its free independent and natural life as a "cave-dweller" in the jungle around the Mempi Himalayan range (12). This is also similar to young girls who enjoy freedom during childhood. As it is natural for animals like tiger to frolic on the sandy bank and in the cools stream and rivulet a long week with its mother, the tiger craves for this natural environment in the cages of the zoo. The tiger's narration that it learnt to adapt itself to the natural hardship after its mother left it amid the danger in the jungle where different animals live also stresses on the importance of the natural environment for the animals. It also tells how it survive the danger and in course of time became the most powerful animal--the supreme lord of the jungle--among the small and week animals like rabbits fox cubs and squirrels. This is what the nature has designed for all the beings on this earth and these beings have been living in this way. The nature has designed the tiger for its strength and activity not for inactivity and slothness. So, as the tiger is kept all the time in one place in the zoo, it gradually losses its natural characteristic and ends up being quite a submissive, modest and timid being. This resembles the situation in which women in patriarchal society have lost their creativity and strength due to their confinement. As the tiger says, "a more slothful creature was never created. All this energy is conserve for hunting food and once that is accomplished he lies down for days on end" (13), so there is a saying in Hindi, "a hungry lion doesn't feed on grass". But in the zoo the tiger has no alternative but to be fed on the flesh cut of from the slaughtered

animal. Thus, the tiger is displaced from its natural way of hunting and drinking the blood of its prey.

The tiger is estranged from its race which the Raja laments most. It lays the claim that animals possess the special means and way of communicating unlike the human being who unnecessarily babble all the time. The tiger says:

We denizens of the jungle can communicate without words, exactly as human beings do—we are capable of expressing to each other sympathy, warning, abuse, irony, insult, love and hatred exactly in the manner of human beings, but only when necessary unlike human beings who talk all the working hours and even in sleep. When I passed by rabbits scurried off, and if a jackal happened to be in my path, he puts his ears back, lowered his tail, rolled his eyes in humility and cried softly. “Here comes our lord and master. Keep his path clear . . .” such attention pleased me and seemed to add to my stature. (14)

The tiger tries to explain to the humans that the animals are also part of this earth and they have their own way of living their life in the forest because we human beings have a tendency to dismiss women and animals as insignificant, brute, irrational and wild creatures. It also appeals to the humans that as it is kept in an artificial environment, it has missed and lost forest life, which makes it “lose all restraint” (15). As a being, it tells us that like human beings animals have their own thoughts and feelings, family life and love their family and offspring. It relates the sad part of its life when its cub and their mother get caught by men and carried away to the zoo. This also depicts how girl children are trafficked and sold. Here Narayan condemns the human act of

displacing the animal life in an unnatural way. The tiger's family life is disintegrated and becomes miserable and the tiger becomes an isolated being. But the men who trap its family revel at their success in trapping the tigress and the cubs. Narayan seems to denounce this as he narrates the tiger's pain and misery:

I [Raja] cried in anguish and desperation – but silenced myself and crouched unobtrusively when I noticed far off in the valley down below a line of men passing, pulling and pushing an open cart on which were laid out the cubs and their mother. The men were singing and shouting vociferously, and did not hear my cry . . . I watched the revelers wend their way. They were too intoxicated to notice me, since I lay concealed behind the boulders. As the procession wound along, I hopped onto another rock and stalked them. As the sun came up my eyes were dazzled, and the procession melted into thin air. I edged to the shade of an overhanging cliff and stayed there. (23)

This passage shows men's callousness towards the animals because human beings take great delight in the pain of the animals which is flagrantly against the environmental ethics. Narayan draws the attention of the human beings to the suffering of the animals, as this act jeopardizes the entire eco-system. The tiger imagines that the hunters must have taken away the entire family, and "sold the skin of the adult, and stuffed the cubs as trophies" (25).

The tiger further expresses its dismay at the people who fail to understand the animal behavior that is quite natural. So, the tiger feels sorry for the men who do not have the least knowledge of the animals and their life. It quotes about the

local animal expert's ignorance about the animals when Raja starts killing domestic animals in the villages. "You must understand that a male tiger hardly ever likes with the family . . . Must be a visitor from another forest. Tigers are not family bound like monkeys and other creatures. Monkeys belong to a more advanced group" (25). The tiger comes to know from this that human beings have "their own theories and it is always amusing to hear them talk about us. Such ignorance and self-assurance" (25). The tiger feels that this inability to understand the animal life does not pave the way to ecological co-existence on the earth one might when Raja tries to take away the sheep from a village he is surrounded by people with torches, spears and sticks in their hands. The tiger wonders as to how the human beings could be "so devilish" (27). The humans fail to understand that the tiger lines on smaller animals-wild or domestic. They are determined to finish off the tiger at any cost. The tiger describes:

But how the five was choking, blinding and scorching: one fellow flung his torch at me, which singed my skin, another threw a spear which gashed my side; I ran round and round madly; I could not fall upon my pursuers as I could not see them clearly. The crowd was intent on murdering me. They were hurling huge rocks at me. Men in their frenzy seemed to have lost all fear, and boys of all ages were cursing and chasing me round and round-I could have fallen on any of them and scattered them but for the fine in their hands. It was unbearable. I was bleeding; I would have welcomed death in preference to the torture I was facing now. (28)

Narayan denounces the torture that human beings give to the tiger. They do not have any humane feelings towards the tiger. They fail to understand the nature's

design that the tiger has to hunt animals for its food. This also makes the tiger believe that humans can become much beastlier than the animals themselves. The tiger also makes it clear that the tiger does not attack humans or other animals for no reason as he says: "I had always tried to avoid encounters with human beings and if I had wanted could have mangled and messed of the human creatures that had entered the stocked that night in the village. But I did not want to. If I had been present at that meeting with the collector I would have proved that the villagers were lying" (29). The tiger then becomes much clever and avoids being caught by the villagers. But finally, he is trapped into a net having iron bars and taken away by the circus masters.

Before it is finally caught by the circus trainer, the tiger describes how it is caught: "as I emerged from my liar late one evening passing through the long grass I heard a bleating and following the sound, saw a well-fed goat in front of me I hesitated only for a moment looked about ,took a leap and landed on its back. At the same time I heard a strange, unfamiliar clattering noise- an iron door came down and shut me in. I was trapped" (42). The tiger is made to suffer in the trap and it has much less space to move, which badly restricts its freedom of the wild and vast space in the jungle. The tiger says: "The trap was narrow and I felt cribbed and cramped. I, who had leaved a full and free life-stretching myself as I pleased or burying myself in the jungle grass. Now had to keep standing as the trap on which was drawn along. A pair of bullock was yoked to it and the driver kept yelling and whipping then" (43). Again the bullocks are exploited by men. This shows how human beings use animals for their benefit and give no care to animals. The tiger then is taken to the circus where the

trainer- commander begins the tedious and inhuman training that is against the environmental ethics. The tiger says:

Now I saw a man with a long staff in hand standing close by, saying, and “Want to go out? All right, come on . . .” and he poked with the staff and laughed when I protested. “Aha, what a beautiful voice. If you were a singer, you could enchant an audience of thousand without a mike,” and laughed at his own joke. Others laughed with him too. I learned later that they were obliged to at his jokes, being his subordinates. As I went along, I learned that he was the owner of the circus. He was the one who made me when I was trapped, and he was to be my commander for years to come. He now poked the staff through the bars and was greatly amused when I jumped about in pain and confusion. He shared with a guffaw, “Aha, you are a promising dancer too!” (45)

As in many places, women are tortured and made to work very hard for the males, the tiger is given severe torture in the circus of training required for the circus for the entertainment of the human beings. It is prodded with the staff and hit to the accompaniment of “stentorian commands” (45). For days the men in the circus keep Raja without food and water. Only Captain with some companion would come to observe him, and then comment and leave. He loses all his strength and can hardly stand up, as there is much less pace around his cage. Even that little movement is lost; the tiger thinks that he might be a carcass for all it mattered. In this state his cage is moved one day and the door opened. Raja recalls:

I was let into a larger enclosure. I jumped out gratefully, but I found that my legs could not support me. But Captain was there at the centre of the enclosure and would not let me lie down. He was uttering a command in a voice which could be audible in the next jungle. He held a long whip in one hand and a chair in the other. He lashed my face several times. My face smarted. I had never experienced such pain before. When I tried to ward off his attack, he wielded the chair as a shield. With my paws I could only hit the chair and he constantly poked my face with it. He commanded, “Run, run,” and kept repeating it with every lashing. (48-49)

To his shame and dismay, this is being watched by other animals beyond the enclosure. For the first time, he sets eyes on those odd, unfamiliar creatures. He cannot understand what species they belong to. Some of them are “tethered to a post” some were free, some in different types of cages (49). Among the birds Raja could recognize a parrot, but not some of the long-legged ones. The camel looks like a grotesque one to him. He becomes aghast at its height and humps. A majestic animal, to his surprise a grass-eater, he is told was a horse. There are many of them; a meaner version of the horse, not so handsome either, was also there, a donkey. Another one that took my breath away was a hippopotamus, which he mistakes for a piece of ill-shaped mountain. Though the tiger can recognize the ape, which moved about freely-shaggy one with awkward swinging arms, which seemed to be well integrated in human society, able to move with humans on equal terms, he has a glimpse of a bear, but no deer, which did not seem to have come to the notice of Captain. The tiger considers them only

“cursed creatures, weighed down with the *karma* of their previous lives, seemed to have come to his notice, who wielded his chair and whip like a maniac” (49). The tiger now understands that he has held him up as a lesson to other creatures, of what awaited them if they did not obey. At least they are fortunate in knowing how to show their obedience. They have managed to be all excellent performers; the tiger has to become a colleague of theirs. This is how the man exploits different animals for their benefit without giving any consideration to ecological or environmental ethics. He finds himself ignorant, bewildered, and in pain. Sometimes he thinks it'd have been a relief to be able to pounce on that man and leave it to chance for one of us to survive. But that chair which he holds makes it impossible for him to approach him, while his whip could reach him all over. He was crying out like a frenzied creature “Run, run, come on!” (50). While the tiger stands paralyzed in suffering he hears one of those watching animal suggests to him in animal language, which no tyrant could suspect or suppress as it would sound like merely a grunt or a sigh, “he wants you to run round and round as if stung by bees at your backside. Do it and he will stop beating you? Otherwise you have no chance” (50). The tiger can't guess where the message comes from whether from the elephant placidly munching sugar cane, giving no suspicion of ever noticing his “predicament,” except through a corner of his eye (50).

When the tiger asks the other animal why they have to obey the human, the animal replies that it is not so easy to do that as he is really stronger than ten of the animals. It says: “Once all of us tried and were sorry for it” (50). The tiger consoles himself in such situation with the thought that mutual communication is one privilege left for the animals: human beings cannot interfere with their

freedom of speech because they never suspect that the animals have their own codes, signals, and idioms. Fortunately they usually do not notice when the animals grunt, hiss or sigh, but when they do, they would talk among themselves anxiously: “Poor thing is making peculiar noises; I hope it is not going to be sick. Must tell a veterinarian to look over the beast: it must be in perfect form for the show tomorrow, for the specially advertised item, otherwise the public will smash the chairs and the gallery. . .” (51).

When the tiger tries and begins to understand what the training means, the master withdraws the staff and jabs his side with the staff. This renders the tiger miserable and does not know how to cope with such act. The master does not give any chance for res, rather drives it round and round with the staff in the narrow space till in “sheer desperation’ as the tiger gets lost in quite a different miserable condition (46). The tiger fails to understand the reason behind all such awful activities. He does not know why he has been brought and he is being made to do such things. The tiger again relates:

It was irksome to stay in that cramped space all day and night may only activity being lying sown and getting up, and again lying down and getting up, stretching myself to the extent possible. And turning round and round, grumbling and whirring. But no one cared. Being used to the vastness and freedom of jungle life, I found this an impossible condition of living. I could do nothing more than pace up and down in despair. (46)

This quote reflects Narayan’s concern and sympathy for the miserable plight of the domestic and wilds animals.

For many days on end, the pain is so severe that the tiger does not feel hungry. When it becomes unbearable for the tiger he does not know that to do and appease his hunger ever it he feels at last. The training process is a hell as defined by the master an “endless stare of torment with so promise of relief or escape” (47). As the tiger lived in a natural way it cannot understand how easily the food comes ones way without working for it , the tiger describes his kind of suffering as and emptiness a helplessness and a hopelessness behind the bars”(47). Narayan refers to bars as made up of metal which he associates with men that subdue the tiger. Narayan writes through the narration of the tiger: Metal which in various forms served the evil ends of man as prison bars, traps, and weapons. I desperately tried to smash the bars again and only made my head bloody when captain viewed me in this state, he only laughed and remarked to his side, “All these stupid creatures are alike! They all expect the bars of the cage to be made of butter. No harm if he learns the facts of life in his own way!” (47).

Human beings keep the animals under their control with the help of metal from which different means of weapons are made. The tiger here expresses its outrage over the metal bars, but the man thinks that the tiger is trying to break the bars. Because the fact is that if there had been not metal, men would not have been able to make so dangerous weapons to trap and kill the animals. Narayan criticizes the humans who, with the help of weapons, inflict great damage to the animals.

Not only the tiger, but also other animals are exploited in the circus. The tiger finds the ape the most lighthearted of all animals as it seems the happiest animal in the circus, walking about freely in human company, fondly clinging to

the finger of one or the other – even holding hands with captain sometimes. He must be conceited, fancying himself to be a human being smoking cigarettes, sitting in chairs and drinking tea from cups, wearing trousers and coat and cap and spectacles, and chattering merrily all the time. His acts in the ring are not different from what he does outside the ring – except a cycle ride combined with trapeze acts. He continuously chatters, grins and grimaces as if it is very happy in its natural environment. Nevertheless, the ape seems against the exploitation of animals. In the tiger's first glimpse of him, he also adds a word of his own: Hey, tiger, run round and round as our boss demands. Let us hope and pray we will see the day when he will do the running and we shall hold the whip . . . anyway, till that good day arrives, obey him and that simpleton will protect and feed us – we are at least spared the trouble of seeking food and preserving ourselves from enemies. He is doing all that for us. He is a damned fool, but does not know it; thinks that he is the lord of the universe. (51)

The tiger runs round in circles in pursuit of nothing – and that seems a very foolish senseless act. A hare is also made to run ahead and it seems to provide a show of reason for running. But that's how Captain seems to want it; the tiger holds his breath, and though his eyes seem darkening with faintness, he runs and keeps running as long as the Captain keeps the whip cracking in the air without touching his back, and that is quite unethical indeed. He goes gyrating round and round following his movement. It seems as much hard work for him as for the tiger. When the cracking of his whip ceases, he too stops. The tiger relates:

It was not possible to run any more. I was ready to fall into a faint and probably breathe my last: breath coming and going so fast.

When I came near my cage I found the door open and leaped in and lay down-expecting to be killed outright for my disobedience. But when I opened my eyes, I saw Captain outside looking at me more kindly than ever. “Well, that was a fine performance. I now have confidence that we can use him”. The whip and the chair were put away and he was unarmed, and that itself seemed to me a good sign. (51)

The cage of the tiger is wheeled away to its original place, away from other animals. He feels sad because he feels better watching others and being in communion with them. Just as he closes his eyes, some warders pole and prod him to move to another cage.

As the tiger has no option but to obey and follow the instruction for survival, he slowly begins to understand the business now and the routine to be followed. Everyday at the same hour they drive him into a wheeled cage and draw it to the larger enclosure and let me out, where Captain waits with chair and whip. The moment the door was raised and the whip flourished I started running round and round. Then back to the cage, to be wheeled off to his home, which he finds cleaned and washed and with food kept for me – an unnatural phenomenon however. The tiger has nothing more to do for the rest of the day. Though life is not so bad, it is not natural after all. The tiger had thought in the jungle that he was supreme. Now that is gone and he is a defeated king and Captain is the “unquestioned suzerain” (53). After all what he expects of the tiger seems so simple instead of understanding it he allows himself to be beaten and suffered through ignorance. And to adapt to the new situation, the tiger passes through a

very severe mental and physical strain as it has to stay cooped up in a cage all day.

But soon the tiger sees more troubling days ahead. It was only a preparation. When he becomes an adept at running he is prepared for the next stage of training. The more difficult part lies ahead. He is let out into the enclosure as usual for more difficult training. The Captain looks more alert as ever with his chair and whip. At the crack of the whip, the tiger starts running as usual, but he finds his passage obstructed by a strange object which he later knows as a stand, placed across his path. He checks his pace, at which the Captain lets out a cry, "Jump! Go on, jump!" and the whip comes lashing on him. (53). All of a sudden, the entire good name he had earned and the good feeling he had developed for Captain seems to be lost. This is the treatment that is meted out to the tiger. So, he feels infuriated at the lashing and feels like jumping on him; but the Captain holds that terrible chair. Now the tiger knows a chair is a worthless, harmless piece of furniture but at times he dreads the sight of it. It appears to him that a mighty engine of destruction. How Captain and men like him could ever have realized how a chair would look to a tiger is really a wonder. In course of time, the tiger is able to have enough understanding of life to smash a chair if it is flourished before his eyes. When he is lashed once again all the old terror of not knowing what he should do come back to him. His friends who had advised him on the first day are not to be seen around there. They are taken away to some other part of the camp by their trainers, who make them go through different drills and stunts. This is all but violation of animal and environmental ethics.

The tiger is given severe torture as it is given electric shock. Another man from film industry, Madan says to the captain,

This is a thing which you might use in an emergency, but generally to tame wild things. . .” he produced a gazette, which when pressed shot out a thin metal rod and at a touch delivered a shock, working on a battery. Madan explained, “Only fifteen volts, but enough to keep any animal well behaved . . . you can try it if you like. (104)

The terrible torture becomes a routine for the helpless and innocent tiger. When the tiger sees no alternative but to obey his master, he begins to follow the instruction of man. This the tiger describes as compulsion to survive on the earth. Because in case of the tiger not following the instructions, he is made to suffer loneliness, immobility, and above all hunger. He says that it is natural for animals to go out and hunt for their food in the natural way. But the master does not seem to give any heed to the tiger’s thought. The master tries to justify his act of torturing the tiger saying that the tiger probably in a previous life enjoyed putting the fellow binges behind bars, so, one has to face the reaction of every act either in the same life or in another life. This is the cunning way of justifying the exploitation of innocent animals.

The Captain comes after Raja in a delirium and hits him as he crouches trembling in the cage. He shouts and orders the tiger out; he jumps out and starts running round and comes against the hurdle once again, knocks it down and runs hither and thither and goes back into the cage. Red in the face and panting like an engine, captain orders, “Take the devil away. Off rations for three days, not even water, and he will come round, you will see . . .” (54).

The tiger gradually begins to follow human speech, by the compulsion of his master but he does not know what the words of instruction such as “jump” mean, and suffers untold misery. He immediately guesses that captain wishes the tiger to cross the hurdle in a jump and proceed to go round, come back to the hurdle and jump over it again and again and again until he was satisfied that the tiger masters the art. Absolutely a pointless accomplishment for the free and independent being of nature like tiger, but captain sets his heart on it. On the day the tiger understands and performs it the master sits beside himself with joy as he has been able to manipulate the tiger. So, he strokes the back of the tiger with the whip handles as he gratefully rushes back to its cage and says, “Good. Keep it up; now you have earned your dinner . . .” (54).

After Raja becomes an adept in racing over and through a variety of obstacles he expects to be left alone. He is ignorant of the fact that it was only a preparation for another stage. What the Captain has in mind could not be guessed by anyone. He always allows an interval between stages of training so that the tiger would live in an illusion of having nothing more to do. But just as the tiger takes rest, his cage is drawn to the training enclosure and there he finds captain waiting with a whip in his hand. Everyday the captain holds a “new terror” for the tiger (59). It is not enough that the tiger runs around very fast and also through the hurdles. At one point, while rounding a bend, he sees fire and shrinks back. He thinks, “Kill me now, but I won’t go near the fire” (59). The tiger is reminded of the village fire and forest fire that now haunts and frightens him. So he shrinks back and naturally the captain’s whip “comes down and bruises” the tiger for not daring to go through the fire ring (59). The captain is so stubborn that he would not allow the tiger to retreat from the fire, nor go

round it or away from it because he blocks all the way and movement of the tiger. His whip can reach the tiger from quite a distance. The tiger relates the panic:

Driven by desperation, panic and fury, I had to content my self with roaring out, “leave me alone, you monster.” But he over shouted me: “Raja, come on through that ring, in there, come on, come on . . . the uproar and the pandemonium we both created must have been heard all over the town. I snarled, showed my teeth, wrinkled my nose, opened my mouth and shut it, and growled as if the earth were rumbling. But the captain was unaffected and warded me off with a chair, and pushed me closer and closer to that fire. All my movements was restricted in such a way as to leave no room for me to move or turn except through the fire. (60)

When the tiger does not obey the captain, he keeps him neither food nor water for many days. This is the captain’s usual method of training the animals. At this the tiger questions the human act of exploiting the tiger: “What right did he have to starve me? I felt enraged at the thought of the captain and his allies and wished the iron bars could yield, and then I could show them the another way. The isolation hurt me the most” (750).

The tiger feels happy to be able to stay in the makeshift wood in the in the zoo. It reminds him of his jungle days and revives or craving for freedom. Though he is protected and fed and looked after by the captain, this seems hardly to suffice. He enjoys being able to move about and exercise his limbs as he pleases. So, though well kept, he is “still a prisoner” like women (96). The tiger

says that If only men could trust him and open the door, he thinks he would go out, run and turn to his cage. After every drill, the tiger feels he is left to laze and live in the delusion that his trials have ended and he is going to “live a happy and free life hereafter. . . The end of one trouble was but the beginning of another” (60, 63). But his wish never materializes; moreover, the tiger is disappointed that people talk ill of animals all the time. He says that it is their misfortune that neither the denizens of the jungle nor those of the towns would trust the animals.

In the circus the tiger is made an object of business as it is hired for films as well. Captain feels that it is a sound way of making money during the interval between two camps. Although he seems indifferent generally in money matters, now a certain degree of greed overcomes him as he sees the possibility of earning more money. He says: “What a lot of money this film business turns over. Let me collect the loot . . . that will be a good break for us” (109).

When the tiger becomes desperate at the end of the day, he refuses to take note of the lamb dangling before, which is kept for stimulating the tiger to action. He looks at him and looks away indifferently, but captain would not let him do anything. The tiger says if he had the gift of speech he would have said, “Please leave me out of it today, I’m worn out” (112). But he can only growl and roar. Not all captains’s whipping and yelling can move him out of the cage. But a unusual thing happens which the tiger had never experienced before. The captain trucks his whip under his arm and brings out a novel object which shots out a tongue of metal at its touch the tiger feels blinded with a strange kind of “pain and helplessness” and runs out of the cage. (113). He tries to do any thing to escape the touch of that vicious tongue. Finally, he just collapses on the ground outside the cage his legs aching with all that jumping to catch the dangling lamb of the previous day.

But captain does not let the tiger lie down. The cameraman and Madan are shouting, “get him on his legs, the reel is running out. Come on . . .” Captain lashed me in the face, and then quietens down, “come on, be good boy. You can rest tomorrow,” (113). In the gentlest tone as always between two lashings, when it does not move the tiger he assumes a third pitch of voice which could reach the skies and his him on the nose which would usually drive him to obedience. It only stirs the tiger’s anger so he swishes his tail and grunts. The captain knows what it means that the tiger is not easy to handle. But he is not the one to care for the tiger’s inclinations. It is his will that counts he knows he can finally impose it on the tiger. He shudders at the idea of going after that elusive lamb again. The tiger says if he could have spoken he would have told the captain,

go away before any harm befalls you, my good man. After all you have fed me and protected me. I shall honour you for it. But please go away and leave me alone. I won’t be your slave any more, I’ll never go back to my cage; that’s all, I won’t do any of the meaningless turns these foolish men around want me to do. I won’t go through them. I like this air and freedom. I’m not going to give it up now.
(113)

It is different at the circus but the present activities appear to the tiger “senseless and degrading” (113). When it exceeds the limits, the tiger thinks of defying the exploitation, but the tiger cannot do so as it is helpless as it unable to express through words. This shows the tiger is exploited by human beings for their benefit which is quite against the environmental ethics. So, the tiger desperately seeks freedom and natural life. So, for this to happen, we human beings need to develop an attitude of respect for natural environment which is being exploited by men. This is what Narayan advocates in this novel *A Tiger for Malgudi*.

IV. Need on Cultivating Environmental Consciousness

This research on R.K. Narayan's *A Tiger for Malgudi* concludes with the advocacy of the equal rights of all human and non-human beings--women and animals. This shows the ecofeminist concern of the writer. Eco, which is a short combining form for ecology, is concerned with the relationship between living organisms in their natural environment as well as their relationship with environment. By analogy, ecofeminism is concerned with establishing equal relationships of all being who are subordinated like women in human society. These are obviously interdisciplinary studies, unusual as a combination of a natural science and a humanistic discipline. That unusual (interdisciplinary) combination of the physical and the spiritual can be seen in some of the terms used in ecology and ecocriticism, which both have the same aim: to contribute to the preservation and survival of man as well as other beings on this earth. The idea is that preserving the non-human world – in its entire diverse embodiment – must be seen by all as a fundamental good for the survival of all beings. So, the imagery of tiger's enslavement and confinement in the cage and subsequent torture in the circus cage at the hand of male hunters and circus masters symbolizes the same predicament of the non-human beings and women in patriarchal society.

In the novel, Narayan relates the sad story of the exploited tiger through the narration of the tiger himself. By this technique, Narayan invites people to understand and recognize the fact that animals are living beings and thus part of natural environment and man must not exploit or torture. Moreover, the tiger urges the readers to read its thoughts and feelings, and listen to the story of its life. He makes a desperate efforts to convince people that the outer feature of the tiger is not be dreaded as each being is naturally different from other being.

The tiger is estranged from its race as it is kept in a cage--confinement, symbolic home of women--after it is trapped, which the Raja laments about most. Then he is given torture in the course of training. Narayan denounces the torture that human beings give to the tiger. They do not have any humane feelings towards the tiger. They fail to understand the nature's design that the tiger has to hunt animals for its food. This also makes the tiger believe that humans can become much beastlier than the animals themselves. The tiger also makes it clear that the tiger does not attack humans or other animals for no reason.

The tiger relates the painful story that he is given severe torture – even electric shock – in the course of circus of training required for the circus activities for the entertainment of the human beings. He is frequently prodded with the sticks and hit as stimulus. For days the Captain in the circus keep him without food and water. Only Captain with some companion comes to observe him, and then comments and leaves. The tiger loses all his strength and can hardly stand up, as there is much less pace around his cage. Even that little movement is lost; the tiger thinks that he might be a carcass. In the circus the tiger is made an object of business as it is hired for films as well. The Captain feels that it is a sound way of making money during the interval between two camps. The animal here is made a commodity for the human consumption. The torture becomes a routine task for the helpless and innocent tiger. When he sees no alternative but to obey his master, he gradually begins to follow the instruction of man. The tiger describes it as compulsion to survive on the earth because when the tiger does not follow the instructions, the captain makes him suffer loneliness, immobility, and above all hunger. But the master does not seem to give any heed to

the tiger's thought. The master tries to justify his act of torturing the tiger as men justify their treatment towards women through different excuses, saying that the tiger probably in a previous life enjoyed putting the fellow beings behind bars, so, one has to face the reaction of every act either in the same life or in another life. This is the cunning way of justifying the exploitation of innocent animals. Narayan denounces all the human acts of exploiting the innocent animals through this novel. This reflects Narayan's advocacy for environmental consciousness which helps humans to respect both women and animals who have been subjugated and exploited for ages.

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