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Women and Nature as Nurturer in Barbara Kingsolver's *The Bean Trees*

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By

Ritu Akchai Magar

Symbol No: 589

T.U. Regd. No: 6-2-0772-0096-2010

Central Department of English

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Tribhuvan University

Central Department of English

Letter of Recommendation

Miss Ritu Akchai has completed her thesis entitled “Nurturer power in Women and Nature” in Barbara Kingsolver’s *The Bean Trees*, under my supervision. She carried out this research from December 2017 to March 2018. I hereby recommend her thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

.....

Anju Gupta

Supervisor

Date: .....

Tribhuvan University

Central Department of English

Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Women and Nature as a Nurturer ”in Barbara Kingsolver’s *The Bean Trees* submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Miss Ritu Akchai Magar has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

Members of the Research Committee

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Internal Examiner

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External Examiner

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Head

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Central Department of English

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Ritu Akchai Magar

## **Women and Nature as Nurturer in Barbara Kingslover's *The Bean Trees***

### Abstract

*This present research analyzes the issue of nurturing power of women and nature on Barbara Kingslover's The Bean Trees. Kingslover's elaborates how women and nature possess the quality of mother and how nature and women are dominated by patriarchal society simultaneously. The nature and women are counted similarly in account of their nurturing and loving role to their children. The negative traits they receive from patriarchal society is reflected on this text. Despite that, she portrays how women can resist to themselves with each other support. To reveal the ill treatments to female and nature by the men's world and their closeness and empathetic feelings to one another is the main aim of the study. In order to analyze the text ecofeminist views of Vandana Shiva and Greta Gaard is used as the theoretical tool. By using ecofeminist ideas the research explores the nurturing capacity of women and nature and their relationship. Hence, the novel reveals not only their endurance power but also their affectionate nature as potentiality for the survival. It also focuses on their valuable relationship and feeling of motherhood for children as well.*

Key Words: ecofeminism, nurturing power, resistance, bonding, patriarchal society, exploitation of female.

This research paper entitled, " Women and Nature as a Nurturer in Barbara Kinglover's *The Bean Trees*" studies Kinglover's *The Bean Trees* from the perspective of Eco-feminism to study similar nurturing attributes of women and nature. The basic outline of the story is about a girl, Taylor Greer, who escapes from her own village because of her fear of getting pregnant. But she unknowingly becomes a mother and fulfills responsibility as mother of a child unknown to her. Taylor, in search of finding better future leaves Pittman where she used to live with her mother. She buys a 1955 Volkswagen and embarks on a personal journey of self-discovery leaving behind everything. She even changes her identity from Missy Greer to Taylor. On the way, at Oklahoma the land owned by Cherokee nation, she encounters a woman who handover a three years old baby to her. She takes that baby with her and reaches to Tucson, Arizona. With new complications in a new society with new members she struggles and spends a new phase of her life. In Tucson she establishes herself with the help and support of other women who stand for her. Other female characters alike Alice Greer, Lou Ann, Mattie and Esperenza always support each other financially and emotionally. Alice Greer, Taylor's mother is a wonderful mother, because she prioritizes her daughter alone rather than her lover as her lover deceives her and puts a proposal to abort a baby, but she rejects him and raises her daughter. Esperenza helps Taylor to win the baby's legal authority. Lou Ann is the most sensible character in the novel. She every time learns to be independent and increases her self-confidence from Taylor. Taylor, at the beginning of her arrival in Tucson, receives a good hospitably from Mattie, and until last moment of the time, she contributes female characters to be strong and bold.

The female characters in the novel organize and battle with their problems on their own through their combined effort in an unsupportive male dominated society.

Kingslover satires on individualistic culture by presenting Native American and their communal support for each other. For instance, the women in the text are not represented as individualistic rather they share communal bonding to each other. Likewise, when Taylor reaches Tucson, Mattie provides shelter and food and also helps her searching for a job. Lou Ann teaches Taylor how to care and protect a baby. In return Taylor also instructs how to become independent and strong. Esperanza who at the last moment plays vital role to get back Taylor's daughter. She becomes a legal mother at first in front of the official lawyer and is handed Turtle to Taylor legally. They are close to each moment of their sorrow and joy till the last moment of their lives. This shows that the bonding of the nurturing capacities between women is indeed major prerequisites for their establishment in the society.

This paper also brings the issue of ill treatment done upon women and nature by the male oriented society. For instance, the small baby Turtle (Taylor's adopted baby) is sexually harassed in her early childhood when she is Three years old. Women are forced to suffer since their early childhood. Later on, the sexual accident happened to Turtle hampers in her external and internal growth as well. Because she was not responding and doing active participants like other normal children. Her father also leaves Taylor, she has no any single glance of her father. Her mother falls in a trap of her father's false love that the man only loves her physical body. So while narrating her story Taylor says, "He was famous for drinking Old Granf Dad with a gasoline funnel, and always told Mama never to pull like anything cute like getting pregnant" (6). As soon as he realizes he made her pregnant he demands for abortion. She is not ready to kill that baby so he breaks the relationship. To examine such issues like relation of women and nature and their similar problems, researcher finds Eco-feminism as an applicable theoretical tool for the research. Because Eco-feminism is a

term, which brings feminism and ecology together, as it views them putting on a same place. The pioneer of Eco-feminism, Vandana Shiva in her book "Women, ecology and Development", mentions that "the rape of earth and rape of women are intimately linked-both metaphorically, in shaping world- views, and materially, in shaping women's everyday lives"(56). This also shows that the problems of women and suffering that the nature goes through are compatible.

As soil or earth gives lives to each and every creature it is named as Gaia, a life giver. Like a mother, land gives life to any creatures on her lap irrespective to who, what and where does they belong. In just the same way Taylor. Likewise, Taylor adopts Turtle the baby who was in heedless stage and taking her responsibility she gives her life similarly on the other hand land provides proper environment to a Wisteria vines and it blooms out there. The soil of Tucson and the protagonist equally provides proper love and care to their babies.

Kingslover presents the central characters being victimized. They are neglected and uncared for from society who later, gained a resistance power. Like a Taylor at the beginning felt difficult in Tucson, similarly Lau Ann who almost felt alone initially. Later on, their unity and closeness with each other make them strong and provide endurance as well.

The text clearly provides an idea that it is writer's wish to see women as bold, powerful and independent. On the other hand, she also desires that nature should take in a concerned manner and present generation should consider its existence in serious matter. Because, we are nothing without nature's contribution, we cannot survive alone. Therefore, not to face any kind of natural calamities in future human beings should be aware regarding nature and its degradation. How can we breath if there are no plants and trees ? Every moment of our lives are given by nature, we are alive and

that is why we can celebrate our each moments! However, what are we doing? We are spoiling its existence we build huge industries, destroys trees overnight, exterminate small creatures by and by. We are not thinking about other things except ourselves. So does the man to woman. Most of the male characters presented in the novel are self centered. Lou Ann, is another female character of this novel betrayed by own husband named Angel. Her husband Angel leaves her when she was going to give birth to a baby boy named Roy whom she raises alone. The minor character as Taylor's one of the friends used to be pregnant and often killed embryo. She aborts her baby because she has a deep anger inside towards own father, as her father used to call her slut when she was at the age of 13. Therefore she asks to Taylor, "Why not, my daddy's been calling me a slut practically since I was thirteen, so why the hell not?" (12). Her father often categorizes her as a slut from her early age so, such bitter word impacts in her psychology therefore she could not find out right and wrong. Therefore, she do not hesitates to do such sinful act. In this way, the male characters dominate almost all the female characters, even minor to major female characters are oppressed by male supremacy. Some have gone through in life psychologically and some are physically.

Throughout the novel, one can not only study the similar characteristics of strength of women and nature but one can also see the other side of their tenderness, emotions and their immense feelings of love toward others as their inner qualities. Dixy Lee Ray in his text *Greenhouse and Earth* posits, "Carbon dioxide from man-made sources comes primarily from burning fossil fuels for home and building heat, for transportation, and for industrial process" (267). Ray reveals the factors, which are responsible for the level of increase in CO<sub>2</sub>. As we know how CO<sub>2</sub> expands its areas the probability of decreasing ozone layer is equally possible. Depletion of ozone layer has adverse consequences on this planet directly; including plants, animals and human

beings. Despite of getting troubles from human beings nature is still providing its love and care to us. Earth still gives us a place to stay, live, and provide different forms of food to survive.

Only a mother can act in a way that despite getting troubles also, she still worries about her children. It is her selfless love and affection to her children that getting a lot of pain and suffering from own children also she never stops to be concerned for her baby. After adopting that baby, also one official lawyer appears in front of Taylor telling her she has to submit official paper to the central office then only she could win legal rights to raise Turtle. She says she has no proper address of Turtle, she has only address of the location and a glance of that woman who handed over Turtle. It seemed impossible for Taylor to discover Turtle's parent. Then she decides to go to that place to find out whether she may find Turtle's relatives. She then goes there with Guatemala refugee couple Esteven and Esperenza, who have lost their baby girl when they were escaping from that brutal place. Taylor plans her search for Turtle's parent and thinks if in case she would not be able to find out Turtle's parent then she thinks she will make custody paper mentioning Esperenza and Esteven as Turtle's parents and their permit to take a Turtle's custody. She reaches Oklahoma where she receives Turtle, but she searches for Turtle's relatives. However she does not find any so at last she, with the help of that refugee couple able to get a legal paper. As she falsely make them parents of Turtle and they sign for giving custody to a Taylor.

In *The Bean Trees*, the landscape and the locations serve as an important backdrop to the story line. In the novel, the characters are made to acknowledge the significance of harmony with nature the way Taylor, Turtle and other displaced people are symbolized by birds make a statement about the vulnerability that Native

people share with nature. Kingslover carries a story of various categories of women in the society and provides a sense of similarity between nature and women. In the novel, there is a comparative study of female with nature. The problem given by male oriented society to the female is equitable with human ill treatments to nature. Nature and women go through similar problems: both of their sufferings are ignored by the society. This paper focuses on questions: how nature and women share similar attributes and how both of them have nurturing capacity. Not only they are similar in terms of loving, caring and nurturing but also they do have similar complexities in their lives.

Kingslover symbolically compares nature with small baby girl called Turtle, the adopted baby of protagonist Taylor, and other women of the novel. For instance, Turtle is first compared with “Wisteria Vines” then with “Pea” and with “Baby Quail” also. Similarly, Taylor mostly counted with land, the land that provides an environment to the cactus and Wisteria vines to flourish in that area. Lou Ann and Mattie who are minor characters are comparatively significant with a mother of Quail who secure her children. Lou Ann alone takes all responsibility of her child Dwayne Roy although her husband does not support her either economically or emotionally. Mattie has made underground tunnel in her house where she can keep refugees and manages to send them to America. Esteven and Esperenza are two of the refugees couple who stayed there for a long time and with the help of Mattie, they succeed to reach America.

This text is set in the early 1980s, it is also read as a critique of the stone heart bureaucrats who present conservative concepts and regulates selfishness for the people. The location where the Turtle was handed to a Taylor is at Cherokee reservation. It is the place, which is known for so-called Five Civilized Tribes, which

was moved by the government of United States to Oklahoma for a decade in between 1830s to 1840s. Once the place Cherokee and other tribes were established, they proposed building their own homes and schools and participating in the drafting of the state constitution. This text is also a reflection of Kingslover's life and her experience; she uses places from her own experiences. She spent her childhood in the rural side, eastern part of Kentucky. Similarly, she also went to the University of Arizona in Tucson where she earns Master's degree in Science and Ecology. She presents those places for protagonist. Firstly, Kentucky is the side where its main protagonist's village lies, secondly Tucson is another place where protagonist shifts and stays with other characters. Kingslover's life also passes on being as an environmentalist and human right activist. Kingslover has helped refugees herself from Chile, EI Salvador and Guatemala in 1986. It is a dream of activist who wishes to see improvements in the same way, working as an activist her dream was always to provide better life to the victimized people.

Her dedication and determination is depicted in her works as in *The Bean Trees*. The characters Esteven and Esperanza and the other refugees and Mattie support them to keep safely in her home depict the real historical political refugees who prove out to escape from such brutal place of the time in Latin America. Esteven and Esperanza are Mayans from Guatemala, where at the time the government was non-democratic in anti-insurgency campaigns that resulted in the destruction of Indian villages and the death of tens of thousands of people. Esteven was a teacher there and active member of a Union, one night the soldiers kill Esperanza's brother brutally and abduct her daughter. Then they escape from Guatemala overnight to save their own life.

The female characters are represented differently from one another as they are

from different background and their age experiences do not match with one another. However, they possess similar problem and contribute to each other as well. Some characters are abandoned by their own husband. Some are suppressed under their own society, beliefs and prejudices, while some are dominated by own family; so one's own belief system in the name of true dedication and love for family women in the novel tolerate dominance.

Even though they are immature, and cannot take responsibility in proper way but they have the qualities of nurturing that is still within their inner side. Taylor, the protagonist from the side of Kentucky, Missy Greer which is her previous name, still in age twenty-three heads towards west with the hope of finding a life that provides better opportunities. She is strong and independent, and appears as fully capable of clearing her obstacles to achieve success and turn out her desire in reality. Whenever she takes the responsibility of Turtle, she fulfills it in a proper way. Lou Ann a single mother abandoned by husband from small town Kentucky staying far from family provides a better care for her son Dyane Ray. Mattie is an independent woman who arranges shelter for illegal immigrants operating a kind of sanctuary.

They are the representatives of nature who have qualities, a power of nurturing like nature. By adopting a baby, taking good caring her child, Taylor proves she has the capacity of a real woman who are able to raise their children. Where, Mattie allows to stay in her home to unknown immigrants from Mexican sides. She also fulfills the responsibility of being a mother. The refugees who escape from their own country and hide in foreign land are totally at the helpless stage. At such helpless stage of that refugee people, Mattie manages shelter them until they do not prepare to shift America. Mattie saves refugees in illegal ways from the police and the government taking her own life at risk. Her activities and concern towards people who

are unknown to her suggests that she has feelings of compassion towards that people, like a mother who always thinks and take an action for the sake of her children. Whereas, Lou Ann even separating from own husband she took care of her son Dwane Ray in proper way. Her husband Angel leaves her when she was at the critical phase of her life. She was near her date of giving a birth to her son. All of the women's behavior and activities make them wonderful women who act for the sake of other people except Lou Ann because she takes care of her child rather than other's child. Taylor Greer the narrator and protagonist of the novel leaves her village and her mother at a tender age to make better life, which she could not build herself staying in Kentucky. The society views women lowly and dominate their self respect. There is no respect for women and could not expect for their welfare from the male oriented society of Kentucky. She has experienced other female's pain as her own. They are forced to get married at a very young age because of their families or due to the unconditional environment. The case of abortion is not a big deal in that place. Girls never reach the high school level, but Taylor is able to reach and make herself independent by doing job in a hospital as a 'lab' assistant. There she came to know about such incident which happened to her friends.

Therefore, such causes make her decide to leave that place. When she realizes that her mother has struggled alone to raise her then her hatred towards marriage and sense of giving birth to a baby grew as unproductive. Then she decides not give to birth to a baby. She buys second hand car without windows. The car looks like a wagon and she moves towards another place. On the way, she finds an unknown woman leaving a baby in backseat of the car, the woman requests to keep baby far away from that place. She even tells her that it is not secure to keep her in that place, because the unknown drunkard man is trying to abuse her sexually. Taylor, not even

aware that the baby is boy or a girl but she keeps with herself. When she leaves that place then she finds that baby needs to change the diapers and when she tends to change then only she knows that was a baby girl, who was sexually assaulted. The baby need warm because it has urinated so she tries to search for a place where she could give some warmth to the baby. The girl who escaped from her society due to the fear of being mother has unknowingly becomes a mother as fast as she took that baby on her hand. Though her dreams, her obstacles and her age too do not allows her to be a mother but her fear in terms of caring the baby reflects females have that in born empathy, love and nurturing capacity.

Many critics have examined *The Bean Trees* from different perspectives, as it is a story of resilient, strong, decent, ordinary women living in twentieth century of America. According to the critics Karen M. Kelly and Philip H. Kelly, “*The Bean Trees* is a ‘teachable’ meaningful novel that wrestles with significant personal and social issues while at the same time pitfalls that frequently incurs. The wrath of censors”(120). Despite the clear opposition, Kingslover finds a way to unite the possibility of a garden with the opportunities of adventure in *The Bean Trees*, her novel about women’s migration from American South to the American West. Merging their characteristics like the desire for movement and a desire to tend a home, Kingslover is able to express female voice that has been lost or subsumed by the white male experiences.

Critic Linda Wagner, finds the vibrant issue of home and family in the novel. She asserts, “*The Bean Trees*, finally, a novel mostly about the varieties of home and many varieties of family. . . the traditional definition of each-the house with the picket fence on its own half aced of land, and, living inside it, a father, a mother, and 2.4 children are images that leave at more people than they encompass” (63-64). She

explains upon the Kingslover's challenging concept of family. In general thinking family is incomplete without male's presence. They are need for proper structure of house. However by challenging the traditional notion of family she serves that without any man and specific structure of home like a block of bricks or wood also females has built their own family with own child.

In her analysis of women's road narrative, Devorah Clarke observes connections between the automobile, one of the most influential technological breakthrough in the twentieth century along with women. Clarke notes that "Taylor drives a car that contains the few of the advances of twentieth century automobile technology such as windows and starters. In push-starting her car, she evokes the day of crank in jeans, aliening herself with . . . intrepid women . . . who refused to led the necessary physical exertion keep them from the automobile" (Clarke paragraph 28). She poses a kind of relationship between women and her car that is depicted in *The Bean Trees*.

Mary Jean Demar explains the novel taking friendship as its prime focus. She argues:

Friendship and community suffuse this novel. Taylor Greer, the novel's central character has a gift for friendship and she not only creates friends wherever she goes, but she becomes member of existing communities of friends. Through portraying Taylor and many people who becomes her friends, Kingslover examines how friends may be build and how much they mean. She demonstrates how the concern for others that leads to the development of deep friendships may also lead to political concern and involvement in political causes. (43)

In Demar's view this novel spreads the positive vibration of friendship. Wherever

protagonist reaches, she receives great hospitality by the other members of the society. She does not only receives greater care but she also spreads love to other members of that society. In general Kingslover deals on showing the importance of friendship and true dedication for each other's critical situation.

According to Mary Ellen Snodgrass, Kingslover, “ makes use of the lowly beans as a double symbol of humility and of nature's building blocks” (50). Snodgrass knows that the bean trees and plants in general, become an important teaching and communication tool for Taylor and Turtle. Even though most of the critics have examined Kingslover's novel *The Bean Trees* from different perspective and researcher found that only Snodgrass's view is quite near to this paper. Critics have written from the point of connection between technology and women. Moreover, others have claimed it as a relationship of friendship while some others take it as an issue of migration while still others look at it from the vibrant issue of home and family. However, only Snodgrass's view is quite close to this finding as she mentions about the symbol of beans as nature themselves and their pathetic experiences given by the male oriented society is building block. Similarly prime focus of this study is to show the similarities between women and nature. Especially in nurturing case and in power of bonding between themselves.

Although, the critics earlier provided the varieties of lens to observe this fiction from different angles, the researcher finds the issue of nurturing capacity in nature and women as equal and this topic is quite justifiable and relevant for the current research. There are many incidents, which led the researcher to reach conclusion of the text as providing the fact that how women and nature could acquire same quality. The incidents between the protagonist Taylor Greer's love for a three years baby and her nurturing capacity to raise that abandoned child name Turtle is

counted with earth's (especially soil) motherly qualities to Wisteria Vines which is adopted from Chinese garden. Likewise, Taylor adopts other's baby, that place too adopts a baby plant of bean that is not originally from that place. Both of them Turtle and Bean grew up together in the garden of love, share by their own mother. That is the selfless love of a mother to a child.

Ecofeminism is a global movement that aims to search for all sorts of women domination, oppression and to their exploitation done by the male dominant culture as well as they run many more movements regarding the favor of nature and women. Eco feminism advocates on preserving the environment, by showing many bad consequences due to unfriendly activities done in the name of scientific invention. In addition, it raises voice for a synthesis of ecological and feminist principles as guiding lines for organizing politics and creating ecological and socially equitable lifestyles for all. At the same time, it also forces to subvert, the gender hierarchy that is constructed by male domain, by questioning such types of biasness. Furthermore, it too focuses the probable convention of women and nature to combat for their rights that hidden by in the name of conventional roles that tagged to them. Moreover, by raising voice questioning the societal prohibition, and analyzing to all subjugated voices, ecofeminism tries to uplift marginalized females and strongly exploited nature by doing critique on the hierarchical discourse.

Ecofeminism challenges the notion that men are more related with culture and rationality, where as women have been associated with nature and emotion. To prove this idea Vandana Shiva, pioneer of ecofeminism, argues that there is connection between dominance of women and dominance of nature. Therefore in her book *Staying Alive*, she states "Feminism as ecology, and ecology as the revival of Prakriti, the source of all life" (24). In her writing, she puts feminism and ecology together by

categorizing them in same arena as life givers. Women and nature are same because their role for their children's growth and creation is same. As earth by contributing its land to a living creature it proves it is a mother because it gives shelter to every living being. Similarly, Taylor putting her future in a risk dedicates her life for baby Turtle. Nature also provides it's everything to all creatures. This brings similarity from many sides. Despite facing lots of troubles both of them have concern for their babies.

Through the point view of Haggard, even literature does not remain untouched by the domination of patriarchy upon women and nature. In the novel *King Solomon's Mines* by H. Rider Haggard, on the way to Solomon's mines Quatermain admits that "there is not a *petticoat* in the whole history" (10), it shows how dominating society was, even late nineteenth century. Considering women as a mere object is another thing but during expedition, the group led by Quatermain hunted many wild animals; either for enjoyment or for the survival he destroys natural objects many times. This shows the reality of patriarchal practices towards the women and nature simultaneously even in literature.

Ecofeminism says women are closer to nature than men. This closeness makes women more nurturing and caring towards nature and environment. Ecofeminism deals with the notion that there is a considerable connection between the oppression of nature, the oppression of women and the oppression of the third world including marginalized classes. To define her idea, Karen Warren as quoted by Irene Sanz Alonso in her essay "An eco-feminist perspective" claims that "There is parallel connection between the domination of nature and the domination of woman" (21). Here, Warren notes that women body and earth are same, and declares how women feel after harassment is done by a male upon her. The same feelings earth experiences when the people misused it. When construction sites placed huge buildings on it,

when industries pollute its land, air, forest, river and many more other parts then earth goes from same pain how women when women's body has been used in forceful way. Women are seriously concerned on taking present activities of human society which directly polluting nature and environment by degrading its capabilities. That is why in history also we can found how they had stand against industrialism which directly pollutes environment. Therefore it is true that they posses similar qualities nurturing power. They organized many campaign and events against non-friendly activities done by the people towards environment.

Another critic Bina Agrawal states, "Men are more related to culture women are more related with environment and hence both women and men are subjugated by men, which are seen as dominant over untamed environment women are related to the environment, thus women and the environment share common inferior position". (34) It is the society's truth that women observe everything from emotional perspectives, where as men rationally. For instance, in the novel before adopting that baby she does not think of being a rational and she gets attached with that small baby so closely that she can not think anything except rescuing the baby. She forgets that she is going to begin her life in unknown place; she forgets that she has to struggle with many things. She ignores doubts that the baby might create many more obstacles on her way. Her love emerges spontaneously whenever she sees that baby. We can see the contrast between male and female's thinking. On one hand, there is a man who assaults the baby sexually and did not care about her tenderness except for his sexual thirst. While on the other, it is Taylor who forgets all her sorrows and cares for the baby.

The journey of bonding and emotional relationship with empathetic feelings between two girls (Taylor and Turtle) has begun from here. The protagonist who is fleeing away from the traditional roles of Women as being married, bearing children

and managing family is unknowingly bounded with such roles. Because of the little baby, even though there is no biological relationship between them, they are tied up in mother and child relationship. The power of bonding reflects here, Taylor is unknowingly starting her traditional roles from here that is why she is starting a new job because she is worried for Turtle on how to feed her and to raise up without money hands. It is the feeling of one's realization of responsibility towards the other. That is why she is so eager to get a job.

Judith Plant in her book *Healing the wounds* posits that “Female principle a term originating from Hindu cosmology denoting woman and nature as a life giving force” (25). In Plant's perspective women and nature are also the source of the new creation. Both of them provide life to their baby. Therefore, writer does not mention any other force as life giver except women and nature. In her sense, these two forces nurture their babies in a perfect way. For instance, their existence gives life for the survival one rather than rescuing for their beneficial. For instance, river flows as a source that helps to quench thirst of living creatures and earth on the other hand favor to others rather than doing for itself. They give life to the living one. All they are serving free of cost because their nature is by birth to spread love and to make her children's better that is why they are often counted with God also because they give life to other. Not only land and earth is counted with nature but each small creature of this universe, including insects, birds, plants, and human beings too rely in nature's category.

The writer illustrates and gives symbolic sense of relationship by connecting nature and Turtle together. Turtle is like a Bean and both carries potential to grow into a beautiful plant. Secondly, Taylor gets extremely surprised when she sees a bean trees blooming in dead winter; she compares it with a Bible story of striking water out

of rock. It is unusual to bloom after getting such condition also. When Turtle's doctor examines her report by seeing her x-ray report, then he knows she is that way she is not growing like other children as she is injured internally. Doctor continues to explain about her past injuries but Taylor looks outside the window and her attention goes towards looking at a bird in the cactus. That bird was knitting nest in the cactus. Then she realizes the moral lesson and compares bird with Turtle and cactus with hostile past birthplace where she was abused. She says, "There was a cactus with bushy arms and a coat of yellow spines as a thick fur. A bird had built her nest in it. In and out she flew among the horrible spiny branches, never once besetting. You could not imagine how she'd made a home in there" (130).

Taylor internalizes and compares Turtle with a bird in cactus, despite of having thorn bird able to build its home and stays there. She also thinks that one day Turtle might be able to come out from her internal injuries on forgetting every sorrow given by male. Here, Taylor compares the bird with baby Turtle and the cactus with male who causes her hostile past. Then Turtle used to play in soil, enjoy with colorful vegetables such as, red capsicum, peas, and etcetera. After getting in contact with nature, her social and psychological state improves gradually. Turtle's condition in her abused state and her condition after getting in contact with nature is compared with 'Vines' or 'Bean Trees' which looked ugly at first and flourished even in poor soil where other plants hardly grows after getting in contact with Rhizobia insect. Here just like Turtle stands in support of Taylor the nature that is, Bean trees stands still after its environment is supported by the Rhizobia. Just like women stand and change themselves even in a new environment with their communal bond supporting each other in their society, the natural aspects like Bean trees also get their existence, and power to live after they come in contact with other natural stimulus.

Sandilands, mentions that, “the link between the subordination of women and the destruction of ecology is same” (45). Val Plumwood in his book *Women Humanity and Nature* expresses that, “women have developed a special connection with nature through their historical oppression” (29). It means women and nature's relationship is nothing new but it has been celebrated from times long. Sometimes they are compared with changing seasons, the other time with little creatures of this earth. For instance here a baby girl Turtle is compared with the month of April:

It's April now, for God sake.”

Did you see that?” Lou Ann pointed at Turtle. Her head had bobbed up like an apple on a string, and her eyes fixed on me as if she had seen the Lord incarnate. “What's up, Turtle?” I asked, but she just stared fearfully from her. She did that one other time that I know of.

I'm saying that bill was for April. She looks up when you say April, especially Turtle did look up again.

“That's her name! April's her name! (172)

When Taylor pronounces the word, ‘April’, Turtle looks up at her and Lou Ann adds that Turtle did the same thing when she said the word ‘April’ when she was reading the Bill. Turtle's birth name, April, references the rainy part of Spring that provide an environment to be grown up for the plants and flowers. By naming a girl as 'April' the writer intentionally tries to prove a female as a source of creator, a life giver just like nature.

She uses 'Peanuts' and 'month of April' symbolically representing Turtle's stage. She shows the connection and similarities between Peanuts and Turtle. Peanuts a plant that grows inside from the land is unseen from the surface level. Different pain that nature goes through is just like that of Turtle's because no one can even feel how

nature is facing all the ill treatments the artificial environment is doing. Turtle's painful heart after getting abused can also not be seen and very few can realize how bigger and how deeper the pain is. As the peanut can only be seen after digging it out, the internal condition of Turtle can only be treated accordingly through internal therapy.

Similarly, Kingsolver continually affirms that humans are also animals, and therefore part of the environment by which they live. Nature and mother are similar in various ways and most of the same qualities they share is selfless love to their children. Even though they contribute so much to their children but also they do not expect anything from us they still care for us. Despite the fact, Turtle not being Taylor's biological child, she shows same affectionate love to her as to a daughter from one's own mother. She knows there may appear many problematic situations if she decides to take the baby with her but rather focusing on such predictable problems she takes the child with her. She knows that she will not gain anything though she takes that child with her. However, knowing the upcoming obstacles she did not leave her alone on heedless stage. In a same way, the entire things show that one can observe Taylor and nature playing equal role in Turtle's development. Taylor as a mother tries to remain close and does activities in favor of Turtle to heal her traumatic experiences.

Nature indirectly provides an environment where Turtle could forget her past accident. In this regard, here earth can be referred as "Gaia" just like Taylor. Like this giving shelter and environment to be lived and grow up Taylor and Earth shows their similarities in case of nurturing and motherhood. At the middle of a text an official lawyer comes to ask a legal paper for custody who stands as a representation of patriarchy who tries to snatch mother's love from a child. He even threatens Taylor to

take Turtle away from her to 'children Homes' until she submits official paper.

It suggests, Male dominance is still in existence to dominate women and nature, they are still in superior position. They create rules, regulations, restriction and boundaries, which is only for women. They define what is moral and immoral for female. How their inventions their creations in the name of discovery affects nature and environment direct way they even do not have any concern and empathy for nature. Their false assumptions social boundaries, their concept regarding women always falls for the degradation of women. For them it is poor thing to born being a girl in this world even women also have these concepts. In novel Taylor says:

“The Indian child was a girl. A girl. Poor thing. That fact had already burdened her short life with a kind of misery I could not imagine. I thought I knew about every ugly thing that one person does not to another, but I had never even thought about such things being done to a baby girl”. (31)

Protagonist also felt that, it is the worst thing to be a girl itself. As she know how it is difficult to live being women. She thinks in this way because she had experienced such concepts, received mistreatment, and false hospitality in her earlier society. Her assumptions regarding a female is still not improved, her mind is shaped in way that she thinks female is a weaker creature of this earth. Therefore, it is the worst thing to appear as female in this Universe. Taylor thinks that the baby born as a girl then she is sure to get encounter with immense sorrow and pain from the society. She is compelled to live as burden in society thereafter.

In this text even some females suppose to think women as not to be compatible to a male existence. They think it is great loss if a newborn baby is a girl in any family. It is regarded as completely loss to invest money for the proper care and betterment of female child. Therefore, Lee Sing one of the minor character

express her indifference towards female:

Lee Sing shook her head as she rang the cash register, and muttered something that sounded to Lou Ann like “New Year Pig.”

Beg your pardon? Lou Ann was a little afraid of Lee Sing, who often said peculiar things like this.

“Feeding a girl is like feeding the neighbor’s New Year Pig. All that work. In the end, it goes to some other family.” (43)

Lee Sing who is a minor character of the novel, owns and runs a small groceries market in Tucson, where Lou Ann and Taylor and rest of the other neighborhood locals buy their products. She judges women as a useless creatures, she dehumanizes women by calling a dirtiest ‘Pig’ to them. She even suggests not to rise them with greater care because one day they will be gone to another place leaving their own family. Therefore, it is unworthy to invest money on them. We can see the conservative concepts of society in terms of women when they consider women as a lowest creature. They do not accept women’s existence in an equal level with other creature.

Women and nature comes on same category as they both goes through several problems because of human's activities in present time, it is losing its balances therefore sometimes in the season of winter it becomes hotter, and sometimes it does not offer any rain drops for the cultivation in summer. Granny Logan is a grandmother of Lou Ann she is conscious regarding such environmental change and expresses her deep concern for the unexpected change in season. As she describes about harsh consequences of current development and industrialization process that have replaced the crops land. She admits:

I don’t see how a body can grow no tobacco if it doesn't rain,”

Granny Logan said,

They don't grow tobacco here. No crops hardly at all, just factories and  
 Stuff, and tourists that come down here for the winter. Its real pretty  
 Out in the mountains. We could have showed you, if you hadn't had to  
 Had to go back soon. The baby coughed again and jiggled him up and  
 down. And it's not usually this January, either. You heard it yourself,  
 Granny the man on the radio saying it was the hottest January  
 temperatures on record. (76)

Due to the non-friendly treatments and negligence towards nature by human beings it behaves in unexpected way which later on falls and hampers humans themselves. The land where often tobacco is cultivated now turned into place for the industries and factory as well. Rather than planting a crops and tobacco, it becomes placements for the tourist area. Generally, January refers to the coldest month but here it come as a hottest day and even the measurement of temperature rises to highest level as never had before. Therefore, the growing concept of over construction and development is becoming the ultimate source for the nature's degradation.

Alice Greer, Taylor's mother is misused by her father he often have a sexual relationship with her mother. He categorizes her as a source of sexual pleasure, that is why he did not, married her. When she becomes pregnant, he orders her to abort the baby because it was going to create a trouble in their relationship. He thought it was very impossible to get a pleasure with a pregnant woman, so he orders to do so. Poor Alice, she only gets to know the hidden motif of his false love. She gets to know that she has been polluted and misused for the sake of someone's pleasure. In early periods the women in the society used to be as secondary object, they are regarded as only means of pleasure. Sometimes female could not preserve themselves from

hungry eyes of male. They were targeted for sexual abuse and entertainment currently after they are born. For instance, a baby girl Turtle was sexually abused even she was at the age of nursery. Even three years old baby is not free from male's sexual hungry eyes. She was just a newly born when she became victim of hungry man. Similarly, Lou Ann who is Taylor's friend also gets betrayed by her own husband in the stage when she was pregnant.

The zoo keeps animals forcefully on display in an unnatural urban environment. The owner of Zoo snatches animal rights; as they bring animals from their homeland forest and keep them for earning money. Taylor says, "We sat for a while listening to the zoo sounds. Between the croaks and whistles of the blackbirds there were distant cat roars, monkey noises, kid noises" (174). Taylor with her friends and children observe the zoo and its animals. Although it is against animals right to keep inside the boundary but also putting them inside the zoo forcefully they proved how heartless they are! Capturing other's right and using them for personal benefit shows they used their supremacy upon innocent creatures. Even though, the animals amuse children and the other people for the same moment but what about their freedom is a big question. This has been taken by owner decisive superiority. In this regard, women and nature are inside the trap of patriarchal society. Both are surviving inside of their dominant attitudes. Only difference is that animals are victimized forcefully and women are emotionally. Cauty states that:

Eco-feminist theory utilizes principles from the ecology and feminism . . . to create equitable and environmentally sounds life-styles. From ecology, it learns to value the interdependence and diversity of all life forms; from feminism, it gains the insights of social analysis of women's oppression that intersects with other oppressions such as racism, colonialism, classism and

heterosexism. Eco-feminism, in its use of ecology as a model for human behavior, suggests that we act out of recognition of our interdependency with others, all others human and nonhuman. (169)

Here Canty's main concern is that ecology and feminism are on the way to move forward for the eco-feminism. Eco-feminism is very dependent upon those two terms. As how females are subjugated by the patriarchal society ecology is too facing problems in the same manner. Every creature including human beings is all interdependent for survival but they are forgetting its contribution. Therefore, at the same moment Canty too asserts that the domination and exploitation of women are going from same way. Therefore, eco-feminism encloses the ecological philosophy to interpret and analyze our activities as we heavily depend upon it for our survival. The nature and ecology treat us as equal manner but it is the work of self-centered people who exchanges and utilizes nature and natural resources for their personal benefit.

There is the great concern for the nature and environment around the characters. The Natives focus on the beauty of the land rather than focusing on the destruction. The characters are often found having respect for nature and go hand in hand with nature. There is the intimate relationship between land and indigenous people who lived there. Narrator shares her experience with nature as:

Lightening hit somewhere nearby and the thunder made Esperenza and me jump. We could see big drops spattering on the ground, and when it came to closer, we could hear them, as loud as pebbles on the window. Esteven danced with Esperenza, then with me, holding his handkerchief in his hand and twirling it high in the air- it was a flirtatious, marvelous dance with thunder for music. (219)

When there was a first rainfall, the characters alike Taylor, Esperenza, Esteven and

Mattie celebrate the first rainfall. Turtle also tries to climb the trees, likewise Taylor in her childhood days loved to do so. Taylor's mother often recalls her God would stay at the higher level of trees. Climbing up in the trees and finding God lies in the Cherokee's blood, which Turtle follow also, is an example of how every generation of Native American believes in nature and its power. The Native American often valorizes the nature and it's every little part of it, in the beginning of the novel Taylor and her mother is seen as their talking as a subtle reminder of their connection to nature and agriculture. They took care about land even the clothes they wear is a color of red and Turquoise which is taken as important in the Cherokee Cosmology. When Taylor drives west, she feels intimidated by the sheer size and barren waste of the Great plain. The barren land of Oklahoma feels dead to her due to the lack of hills and trees. Even the Cherokee tribe also does not prefer to this land because in their religion they worship trees as their belief is God stays in the top of trees. For the indigenous people nature is everything, they count trees as a god and they want to stay close with their God which is trees. This proves nature's value in their lives. Nature plays significant to their lives therefore they do not like to stay away from trees.

Janet Biehl *Rethinking Ecofeminist Politics*, focuses on the crucial issues related to the equality between women and nature on the basis of their nature for existence. She finds their nurturing and enduring power as their basic components on reflecting their maturity since many years ago. In the sense of their nature she defines:

The implications of an ethics based on biological attributes such as caring or nurturing to be devastating for women for ecofeminists, women's caring and nurturing have presumably been so long lived and so extensive and their association with nature. So long-standing that their own nature in ostensibly

sufficiently permanent to be constituted as a ground for ethics. (25)

Biehl argues about how patriarchal society looks women and their nature of loving and nurturing in a weak manner but in reality it is male's goodness and their luck to find such characteristics in women. It is women's and nature's factor about power which they have from their birth. But patriarchal society on the other side taking their positive traits and their endurance power still treats women and nature merely as an object. For instance, another character from novel *Lou Ann* another too gets trapped when her husband turned into a one-leg man after meeting an accident. Every time he interpreted her falsely and blame as if she is in relationship with other person. He becomes unable to have physical relations with her after losing his one leg. Angel, Lou Ann's husband often tortures her after he becomes crippled. He used to blame her by saying she desires to have sexual relationships with other person so he often "listed names of people, mostly friend of him with whom she could slept with, or if she had wanted to" (34). By this we can analyze how lowly has been a female being interpreted by most of the male.

Despite the fact that most of the male members of the society like Angel humiliate women but women always take care of their own family. Like Lou Ann who always thinks to reunite with her husband and is ready to bear every bitter words from him who defines her more lowery than a prostitute. She never discuss with him in a loud noise, she bear all those things, because she loved her husband. This is the quality of most of women; even though she is suffering badly from the same person she never thinks unsatisfactorily about them, never express their bad attitude to them. Here, Lou Ann always stays silent though Angel blames her for having an illegal relationship with other people. "No matter how loud his voice became, Lou Ann could still hear the jingle. She could never think of anything to say that would change

the course of these arguments, and so they went on and on” (34). Here she tolerates everything, harsh comments given by her own man. Lou Ann’s endurance power let her feel that she can live her life with Angel. Her endurance powers like a nature let her tolerate her own husband’s torture and humiliation. And still would not let decrease her love and loyalty towards him.

When Lou Ann and Turtle discusses about upcoming wedding, their children Turtle and Dwanye Ray play in a Roosevelt Park which is also known as a Dog Doo Park and Dead grass park sometimes. The park was not like that before. It was full of greenery; many creatures made their homeland in that Park. Slowly due to human impact the park, lost its originality and it transformed into a barren land. It is an instance how human takes care of nature and treats it. Despite the fact how human turned that vegetation into desolate place it still is contributing human's children to play there. This shows nature also doing same things, like Lou Ann to her husband. She though gets psychologically weak by his rough comments and gets hurt by her own man. She has no problem to think about him. Rather she tries to provide good hospitability to Angel, just like nature cares and nurtures humans even though it loses its charm and previous freshness. That is why the natural park ‘Roosevelet Park’ is still ready and stands to entertain children. The park has become solace for Lou Ann and Turtle.

The theme of love and nurturing emerges in characters from the violence and poverty in the novel. When Taylor finds the abused child violated by a man, her love towards the baby appears automatically. She takes that child and decides to take with care of her. It is her love for that victimized child forgetting every sorrow while she adopts the baby. She has grown up in a poor family where it was hard to meet most of her needs as her mother could not buy things Taylor needed. From her earlier age she

has learnt to prepare for own self, she was engaged and experienced on a variety of works. That is why she feels the baby to be just like her. Taylor had faced uncountable difficulties in her life from the scarcity of money and parental love so she could not see the baby alone in the same situation like herself in the past.

In conclusion, women and nature share similar attributes to nurture and take care of their children. The nature and women like Taylor, provide immense love without any selfish intention towards whom they are responsible. They love and do not expect anything in return though they suffer from the one whom they care and love. Both nature and women have got their own potentiality as a mother. They are presented as strong as both of them fight for their resistance in order to keep nurturing their child even in a harsh environment as the bean tree and other female characters like Taylor. Women like Turtle emerge out of the violence and pain which is given by patriarchal society whereas nature stands out of the polluted environment to raise different other species including human. Just like nature bonds with different natural aspects to protect the natural elements women too serve for women themselves in order to let their nurturing capacity worthier for everyone around them. Through these evidences gathered from the novel by Kingslover, this paper finds out the symbolic connection between women and nature as well as female bonding.

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