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WOMEN AND ENVIRONMENT: AN ECOFEMINIST READING OF ROKEYA SAKHAWAT HOSSAIN'S "SULTANA'S DREAM"

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ABSTRACT:

Women and Nature are united through their shared history of oppression. Ecofeminism connects the devaluation and abuse of women with that of environment. An ecofeminist utopia is depicted in Rokeya Sakhawat Hossain's satiric narrative "Sultana's Dream", which deals with the issues of gender, nature, science and education. The story shows how nature works for the benefit of women and gives resources to women to progress and to implement a harmonious relationship between women and environment. The Lady Land, where the story takes place, is itself an embodiment of scientific exploration of nature and it incorporates the idea of ecological balance by using flying vehicles for the mode of transport, extracting water from the cloud, keeping the surrounding clean and turning their whole country into a garden. The "Male-Land" restricts women to "Purdah" and the women do the household chores and think about their condition as Sultana was doing in the story, but the representation of "Lady-Land" in "Sultana's Dream" combines science and technology to empower women. Needless to say, the direct reversal of gendered position in "Sultana's Dream" left us with the interpretation of ecofeminist emancipation of women and nature.

KEYWORDS: Eco-feminism, Gender Discrimination, Feminist Science Fiction, Eco-criticism, Women Empowerment.

Introduction:

Eco-feminism brings feminism and environmentalism together and argues that the domination of women and the degradation of nature are the results of patriarchy and capitalism. The principles of ecological feminism are based on nature as the central idea for conservation and protection. To quote Mary Maller, a UK academic professor, "Ecological feminism is a movement that sees the relationship between the exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subjugation and oppression of women ... Ecological feminism combines elements of feminist and

green movements.”Brings together, while at the same time challenging both.”

Rokaiya Sakhawat Hussain’s “Sultana’s Dream” is one of the oldest science fiction stories written by a woman. Rokeya’s witty narrative about a society dominated by men, also reflects an alternative ecological feminist science—one that serves society better. Activist Ynestra King said, “We see the devastation of Earth and its creatures by corporate warriors and the threat of nuclear annihilation by military warriors as feminist concerns. It is the malevolent mindset that deprives us of our right to our own bodies and our own sexuality.”Deprives, and which depends on many systems of domination and state power.” This radical ecological feminist perspective is vividly depicted in “The Dream of the Sultana” as Rokaiya points to the social construction of ‘gender’ and the dismantling of the gender binary. Sultana, the protagonist in the story, is sitting on an easy chair, “lazy thinking about the status of Indian womanhood” and falls asleep. Sultana awakens in Lady Land and with Sister Sarah she travels to Ecofeminist Utopia, a futuristic utopia, filled with wisdom and peace rather than wealth and power. In a 1993 introduction to the book *Eco feminism*, Maria Mies and Vandana Siva asserted, “Our aim is to go beyond this narrow perspective [patriarchy and hierarchy] and express our diversity and address the inequalities inherent in world structures in a variety of ways.” Those who allow the north to dominate the south, men to dominate women, and the frenzied plunder of more resources for more unequally distributed economic benefits, to dominate nature.”Rokaiya was already exploring these ideas by presenting Lady Land, led by Lady Principal. She managed to bring women into the scientific world and the politics of war, which were traditionally male-dominated strongholds. The dream sequence of the story offers so many ideas that were unimaginable to women at the time Rokaiah was writing. Femininity’s emancipation finds its place in the ecofeminist utopia-Lady Land, a land of women, for women, and ruled by women. In this fictional universe, women have invented flying cars and have automated industries and agriculture.

In his world of science-fiction, he has also learned to manipulate the weather. They see that animals have a bigger mind and stronger body than men but they dominate or control humans but men were so foolish that they thought strength comes from dominance. Women’s closeness with nature is deeply rooted in social structures because women’s fertility has a biological relationship with nature. Most of the innovations in Lady Land’s women’s universities were to enhance the gifts of nature. One of these inventions was the captive balloon which they managed to keep cloudy-over ground and thus could take out as much water as they wanted. This fact enraged another university woman and invented a device by which they could collect as much sun-heat as possible and this heat was stored to be distributed among others.

Vandana Siva argues, “When these resources are already being used by nature to sustain the production of renewable resources and for sustenance and livelihood by women, their turn to market

economy is the key to ecological sustainability.”Creates a situation of scarcity and creates new forms of poverty.” In contrast to the men’s idea of increasing their military power, women’s universities had accomplished the goal of ecotourism by engaging themselves in scientific research, conserving energy and exploring harmony. He broke the dualistic ideas in a society without hierarchy and reciprocity through the first stage of energy conservation. As noted in Peter Barry’s “Beginning Theory,”“eco centred reading, in contrast, focuses on the owner and his psychology, rather than on the inside, on the home and its environment.” In the story the outdoors is preferred because the Sultana found that the whole country was a garden. The house of Sultana’s fellow sister, Sarah, was situated in a beautiful heart-shaped garden. She described the kitchen that was located in a beautiful botanical garden. Every creeper, every tomato plant was like an ornament. There was no smoke, everything was clean and bright. The windows were decorated with flower gardens. The greenery of Lady Land is commendable where the paths are covered with moss and flowers which give them the feeling that they are walking on the soft carpet of nature. The planned plantation represents the well planned social structure of Lady Land. They can keep their country cool even in hot weather. In hot weather they sprinkle the ground with plenty of rain drawn from artificial fountains and in cold weather they keep their rooms warm with stored sunlight. They are engaged in giving produce to nature as much as possible.

The Noble Queen of Lady Land is very fond of botany. His ambition is to turn the entire country into a grand garden. The level of equality and upliftment among women throughout the society is seen through the character of all. In her book ‘Patriarchy and Accumulation on a World Scale: Women in the International Division of Labor’, Maria Mies said, “In a paradoxical and exploitative relationship, the privileges of the exploiters can never become the privileges of all. Is based on the exploitation of the colonies, then the colonies cannot obtain wealth unless they also have colonies. Therefore, a feminist strategy for emancipation cannot aim at the complete abolition of all these relations of regressive progress. It must mean that of women by men, All exploitation of nature by men, of colonists by colonists, of one class by another must end, as long as the exploitation of any one of these is pre-eminent for the progress (growth, development, progress, humanization etc.) of a class of people. The condition remains, feminists are not talking about the liberation of ‘socialism’. From the same lesson we see that the patriarchy has emotionally subdued women from talking and confined them to household chores devoid of education, as Sultana admits: “But I do not understand that How was it possible to store water in the pipes. He explained to me how to do it, but I could not understand him, because my scientific knowledge was very limited. The lion analogy establishes how power comes from within as the queen presents men as a gender that does not have all the power and needs to be regulated: “Why do you allow yourself to be silent?” Because it cannot be helped because they are stronger than women. Leo is stronger than man, but it does not enable

him to dominate mankind. You have neglected your duty and you have neglected your interests. Have lost their natural rights by closing their eyes for the sake of their eyes.”Reflected in the words: “But we must leave it for now; for the gentlemen must be cursing me for keeping them away from their work in the kitchen for so long.”Rokeya shows in the text that the problem cannot be solved by erasing men from society but by showing them what equality is and establishing equality within the environment. The women of Lady Land believe that violence should not take place. Otherwise, they would follow the same path as men: “While women were engaged in scientific research, the men of this country were busy increasing their military power. When they learned that women’s universities were drawing water from the atmosphere and collecting heat from the sun. able, they simply laughed at the members of the universities and called the whole thing ‘an emotional nightmare’.

The ecological and social problems of our times demand an analysis and condemnation of the economic interests involved in environmental devastation. But a critique of gender identity is also necessary if we want a moral political change that goes beyond rational management of resources. Men (andros) would be required to reveal the androcentrism that scales every value. Androcentrism is an important concept for forming the ideology of dominance. The androcentric leaning of culture comes from the highly historical dichotomy of the social roles of women and men. In the patriarchal organization, the harshness and lack of empathy of the warrior and hunter became most valuable, while the attitudes of affection and compassion related to the daily tasks of caring for life were exclusively assigned to women and strongly underestimated. In the modern capitalist world, under the ubiquitous discourse of the insatiable pursuit of money and competition, the old desire for patriarchal authority beats. Therefore a critical approach to gender stereotypes is also necessary to achieve a culture of sustainability. It is not about falling into the discourse of inevitability or admiration that makes women self-denying defenders of the ecosystem, but the abilities and attitudes of empathy and attentive caring that are highly valued, teaching them even to men from childhood. and applies them further. Our species, animals – were enslaved and destroyed on an unprecedented scale – and on Earth as a whole (Velasco Cesma, 2017).

Criticism of the neoliberal development model based on market competitiveness, which exploits and oppresses, should also have a gender perspective. It's time to demand, teach, and share attitudes, roles, and qualities, because praising the virtues of caring without this appreciation for the critical attitude that condemns power relationships eventually ends in a sweet and sleazy discourse. . Universalization of the ecological and post-gender ethics of care is a pending issue in daily life. Much of women's emancipation rests on industrialization, packaged or "disposable" goods, which are harmful to the environment. If we have not envisaged equality in care, how will we organize sustainable daily infrastructure without sacrificing the precarious places of women's freedom? This universalization of the ecological and post-gender ethics of care is a pending issue across education.

We can say that the prevailing environmental education still does not give enough visibility to women or provide a significant awareness of gender roles. Nor does it specifically favor the emergence of vigorous emotions in relation to the natural world. Here, the cause/feeling dualism, which has a long patriarchal history, operates. It can be said that, except on rare occasions, developments in environmental education do not pass the important ecological feminist test. We need a re-concept of man that integrates reason and emotion, an expanded moral sense and an ethic of responsibility, taking into account the new technological prowess of the species.

The Library Journal described the short story as "an interesting and informative work for the Asian Studies and Women's Studies collection". Publishers Weekly cited it to be "a window opened very briefly onto a world whose exoticism is only covered by its repression".

By presenting an alternate reality where women are scientists, politicians, rulers of the country, Rokaiya's "Sultana's Dream" liberates women in society. Lady Land presents a harmonious space where everyone's life is directly connected with nature. This Eco feminist utopia works in tandem with nature and technology. Scientific and gender discovery in "Sultana's Dream" has given us a better view of society by reshaping, reshaping and reversing gender roles and a way to eradicate all forms of social injustice against women and the environment.

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