

Tribhuvan University

Eco-consciousness in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*

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Declaration

I hereby declare that the thesis entitled

"Eco-consciousness in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*"

is original work carried out as a Master's student to submit at the Department of English, Ratna Rajyalaxmi Campus accepted to the extent that assistance from Others in the thesis's design and conception or in presentation style, and linguistic expressions are duly acknowledged.

All the sources used for the thesis have been fully and properly cited. It contains no Materials with to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other Degree at Tribhuvan University or any other educational institution, except where due Acknowledgement is made in the thesis paper

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Letter of Approval

This is to certify that the thesis entitled **Eco-consciousness in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*** submitted to the R. R Campus, Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Durga Acharya has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

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Abstract

The major thrust of this study is to probe the projection of eco-consciousness in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. An appreciation of the natural beauty of the forest is presented through the song of Amiens in Act II Scene (v). The song is truly dedicated to a true lover of nature to lie down under the greenwood tree and enjoy the sweet, joyful song of the birds. Here the only enemy is the adversities of the rough, wintry season. According to the song, this is an ideal place for a person without any worldly ambition, to live in the open air, greeting the wind and rough weather. In short, eco-criticism is an effort on the part of literary critics to add their contribution to the collective efforts of the participants in other disciplines such as: theology, politics, anthropology and psychology, to reserve nature around them that had been kind and benevolent throughout the ages. Duke Senior too accepts the valuable effects of the forest. In the last scene, the Pages sing a song in appreciation of spring, portraying a beautiful picture of this lovely season. As this is the season of the lovers, they too sing in ecstatic state of mind along with the sweet, tinkling song of the birds. There are plenty of signs of the contrast between the forest and the court. For example, we may refer to the introductory speech of Duke Senior in Act II scene (i) addressing his companions in exile. Here through a rhetorical interrogation he asserts that their present state of exile in the heart of nature is sweeter than their previous life in the court.

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Chapter I

Introduction: Defining Eco-consciousness

Eco-consciousness is consciousness about the interrelatedness between nature and human beings. Its assumption is that the survival and continuity of the survival of human beings lies in the preservation of the ecological integrity and purity. In the words of Barry Commoner, the deep reciprocal relationship between nature and human beings is beyond the reach of rational calculation and utilitarian appropriation. For Commoner, any realization about the relation between man and nature has to be far more mystical, deeper and inscrutable than what appears on the surface. Thus, human nature connection is more of consciousness and less of physical attachment of detachment.

In the play *As You Like It*, Forest of Arden symbolizes pure attraction Oliver, the elder brother of Orlando. He has been painted in black in the first half of the play. Apart from his misbehavior with his brother, he even plots to kill him by burning. Such a cruel man enters the Forest of Arden. He experiences change after being rescued by his brother. Moving from the low level of thinking to the higher level of thinking is the result of eco-consciousness. It accepts the existence and basic value of everything on the planet. This awareness is doubtless an ecological awareness. Another character to experience such sudden change of attitude is that of Duke Frederick. Only on the lap of nature, such a change is possible. That is why it is a highlight of an ecological awareness.

In the beginning of the play, the brother banishes his brother-king. At the end of the play he retires from the worldly life. He restores all his wealth and power upon his brother. The reason behind this conversion is the magical power possessed by the Forest of Arden. Here eco-criticism offers a more reasonable interpretation.

According to it, nature itself has a benevolent influence upon all the creatures. Once people come under its soothing effect, they will find peace and rest within themselves. Such was the case of Oliver and Duke Frederick too. After the boring ways of life in the court, they entered into the peaceful atmosphere of the forest. Then they realized the meaninglessness of wealth. They dislike being attracted by power and lust which lead to nowhere but to damnation. So, they reject all their evil designs in order to live a new life in the lap of nature.

Forest is a natural space where the characters are allowed to be themselves, being free from the socio-political trouble of the court. Here they are free to create alternate identities, and perhaps the title of the play is derived from this aspect of Arden. As Garrard opines "Pastoral often used nature as a location or as a reflection of human predicaments, rather than sustaining an interest in and for itself" (35). Arden is capable of providing everybody what he/she desires. Thus the duke with his retinue has to hunt to get their food, while Audrey could manage all her needs by keeping goats.

For Orlando's poems, there are plenty of receptive tree barks. Oliver is welcomed by the snake and the lioness that help him in his reformation. An eco-critic reads literature and environment side by side with his one eye set upon the work of art. Other critics scan the ecological processes around him. This is about the consciousness of ecology in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. The opening scene of *As You Like It* displays Orlando and Adam discussing in the orchard adjoined to Oliver's house. Rosalind and Celia are introduced to the audience while they were wandering in the lawn.

In Act II Scene (iii) the jealous Duke Frederick is endangered by the good reputation of Rosalind among people. He exiles her from the court. Celia, out of her

love and compassion for her sister, deliberately takes the exile upon herself. On a decisive moment, she leaves the court in disguise. On the other hand Orlando waits passionately for an opportunity to get rid of the conspiracy of his brother to kill him. He escapes into the forest, with Adam willfully accompanying him.

Duke Senior, the father of Rosalind, along with his courtiers has already taken refuge into the forest after his exile from the court. Almost all the major characters assembled into the Forest of Arden. An appreciation of the natural beauty of the forest is presented through the song of Amiens in Act II Scene (v). The song is truly a call to a true lover of nature to lie down under the greenwood tree. They enjoy the sweet, joyful song of the birds. Here the only enemy is the adversities of the rough, wintry. The courtly life is full of jealousy and revenge. Genuine human relation and emotions have no value. A younger brother goes against his senior brother.

Two brothers from the same mother are bent on killing each other. Senior Duke is on exile in the Forest of Arden. Rosalind is forced to repress her genuine love for Orlando. Love, passion and emotion get troubled. The natural longing of human beings for harmony, understanding and order is blocked in society peopled by corrupted power mongers. In this condition, the senior duke, Rosalind, Orlando and Celia hope to find harmony, understanding, and reciprocal exchange of favor. The lap of nature, the Forest of Arden contributes to the harmonization the troubled fraternity between the senior duke and Frederick. The alienated and estranged love between Rosalind and Orlando moves to the direction of marital bonding.

Oliver is guilty. He asks for forgiveness with his brother Orlando whom he had betrayed. Oliver too finds his love, Celia on the lap of nature. The Forest of Arden is soothing nature. It heals human consciousness to the higher level. Consequently, all pains betrayal change giving rise to understanding and harmony.

The degraded human relation is healed and uplifted in the play. The contact of human beings with Nature plays main role in solving some of the contradictions that human society creates.

Impulsive actions are all solved by the grace of nature. Only the interaction between nature and human beings carries textual relevance in this study. William Shakespeare as a playwright stands the test of time. He is mainly known for his knowledge of human nature. His dramatic specialty lies in his capacity to give dramatic form to the conflict between good and evil. He not only poses the conflict between good and evil but also provides solution to the conflict. His comedy *As You Like It* is widely known for its happy ending. Commenting on the typical specialty of *As You Like It*, Junita K. Hammons Hall makes the following remarks:

In his work, Shakespeare utilizes fools to provide reflection and commentary on the decisions and behavior of other characters and the world in which they lived. Touchstone, the fool featured in *As You Like It*, not only provides the play with a hearty dose of humor, but also serves to highlight other characters' personal flaws. His name makes reference to the touchstone used by alchemists to detect the presence of real gold. (2)

Touchstone also voices the arguments for and against country and court life.

Occasionally the play centers on a debate that touches many of the play's characters.

He enjoys twisting words and logic. His style of speech proves both entertaining and frustrating.

Sabine Narr notices the strategic use of language and rhetoric in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. Pointing out the reason for the strategic use of language and rhetoric, Narr takes the following stand on Shakespeare's *As You Like It*:

Especially in Shakespeare's early plays we can find the regular type of blank verse. Of course, we still find the regular type in *As You Like It*, but the later the plays were written the more variations can be found. It is interesting and helpful for interpretation to study the modification of the end-stopped regular type and to see where Shakespeare used which variation. (3)

Shakespeare's talent for intellectual debate along with skill in blending disparate elements is fully exploited in the play. He infuses into these play flashes of coincidence and external intervention from which further effect can be magnified. This spirit of taking nothing at face value is also a considerable dramatic achievement.

Mark Bracher notices the role of conscious will to action and unconscious awareness of self in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. Praising the blending of these two separate categories, Bracher makes the claim:

Such, at least, are the assumptions which seem to inform *As You Like It*. For in this play Shakespeare presents us with two groups of characters embodying opposite types of self—one exclusive and the other inclusive. These actual selves, moreover, can be seen to result from the characters' tacit and largely unconscious assumptions about the fundamental nature of the self—about what constitutes one's identity. (226)

One group of characters tacitly assumes that human selves are primarily closed entities. These entities are opposed to other selves. This largely unconscious assumption is manifested by the envious, antagonistic, and even violent behavior of those who hold it. The minute details regarding the lives of Shakespeare appear in the alternative cycle of happiness and sadness, mirthfulness and misery.

Nasib Kumari is of the view that Shakespeare's *As You Like It* is full of ideal, intelligent, humorous and untrustworthy characters. From the complex web of diverse types of characters, meaningful crisis and conflict arise the resolution of which creates moral lesson of universal importance. Kumari's brief view is reflected in the following extract:

Like Rosalind, Celia is physically attractive, intelligent, and witty; also, like Rosalind, she has a bright sense of humor. Both girls embody the essences of the ideal heroine. Celia also shares with Rosalind a reflective turn of mind, which is seen in their discussion of Fortune and Nature. But, the fact is that Celia is not, however, a carbon copy of Rosalind. Rather, she serves as a foil, a mirror, a young woman who brings out, by contrast, the distinctive qualities of the play's heroine.

Celia shares the same virtues with Rosalind raises her attractiveness. Although Celia is quite able to hold her own in witty conversations with Rosalind and Touchstone, she is usually reserved in public situations. There are the important scenes in which both girls are present. The scenes are dominated by Rosalind.

Mark Ronk notices the subversive and destabilizing effect of collage in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. The diversity of characters from different classes and with different fates and fantasy constitute the core collage of the entire play. Ronk's view is mentioned in the following extract:

As You Like It repeatedly destabilizes what we have seen and forces us to experience theater in the making. Any theatrical production offers a complex collage, many visual sign systems of text, space (off- and onstage above and below stage), costumes, gestures, and scenery. To some extent here I take for granted the materiality of stage production

in order to focus on ways in which what is obviously set forth is simultaneously erased and refigured, and to ask, finally, to what end. What Shakespeare's theater enacts explicitly is how different sets of signs undercut one another. It also purposely problematizes theatrical representation itself. *As You Like It* is more than an isolated play about lovers in the forest. It embodies a theory of theatrical production.

Various critics examined *As You Like It* from different perspectives. They also arrived at different conclusions and findings. Yet, none of them dwell upon the issue of eco-consciousness. Those characters whose sensibility, emotions and understanding are spoiled and weakened by the conflict and intrigue at court find solace and satisfaction in the lap of nature. The more they stay in the Forest of Arden, the more power to perceive the limits of their thoughts come. Only on the lap of nature, those who committed blunders of unpardonable type can realize their guilt, wrong doing and acts of evil proportion. The proximity of Rosalind, Orlando, Frederic, Oliver and Celia with nature opens the possibility of rapport and harmony. The consciousness that nature can heal, cure, redeem and uplift mankind in a state of confusion is noticeably present in the play.

Gred Garrad is a noted ecocritic. He sought to set up the relationship between literature and the physical environment. He concludes that human beings interact with nature for the sake of multiple purposes. Out of their interactions, they happen to develop several responses and impressions about nature. Literature becomes an organized mode of expressing what human beings feel and experience out of their interaction with nature. Gred Garrad argues that "eco-criticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Eco-criticism takes an

earth-centered approach to literary studies” (33). The exclusive concern of eco-criticism is to examine how nature is reflected in the literary works.

In this respect, eco-criticism is closely related to environmentally oriented developments in philosophy and political theory. Timothy Luke puts forward the view that many styles of ecologically grounded criticism circulate in present-day “American mass culture, partisan debate, consumer society, academic discourse, and electoral politics as episodes of eco-critique, contesting our politics of nature, economy, and culture in the contemporary global system of capitalist production and consumption” (17). In the spectrum of several ordinary activities of human beings, aggressive approach to nature is reflected. From micro level, such aggressive advance towards nature and biased outlook on nature-human relationship should be corrected.

Eco-consciousness in Shakespeare's Plays

This research probes the issue of eco-consciousness on the part of those whose relationship and common human bonding are spoiled by greed, pride, arrogance and cavalier attitude in Shakespeare's *As You Like It*. In the play, Forest of Arden appears to be endowed with pure enchantment. Oliver, the elder brother of Orlando, has been painted in black in the first half of the play. Apart from his misbehavior with his brother, he even plots to kill him by burning. Such a wicked fellow enters the Forest of Arden. He undergoes conversion after being rescued by his brother from the attacks of the snake and the lioness. Another character to experience such sudden change of attitude is that of Duke Frederick. In the beginning of the play, he is a usurper banishing his brother after snatching his dukedom. At the end of the play we find him retiring from the worldly life, restoring all his wealth and power upon his brother. The reason behind these conversions, as is explained in conventional classroom reading of

the play, is the magical power possessed by the Forest of Arden. Here eco-criticism offers a more reasonable interpretation.

According to it, nature itself has a benevolent influence upon all the creatures. Once people come under its soothing effect, they will find peace and rest within themselves. Such was the case of Oliver and Duke Frederick too. After the tedious ways of life in the court they entered into the peaceful and serene atmosphere of the forest, they realized the meaninglessness of wealth, power and lust leading nowhere but to damnation. So, they overthrew all their evil designs in order to live a new life in the lap of nature. It's a natural space where the characters are allowed to be themselves, being free from the socio-political burdens of the court. Here they are free to create alternate identities, and perhaps the title of the play is derived from this aspect of Arden. As Gred Garrard opines "Pastoral often used nature as a location or as a reflection of human predicaments, rather than sustaining an interest in and for itself" (35). Arden is capable of providing everybody what he/she desires. Thus the duke with his retinue has to hunt to get their food, while Audrey could manage all her needs by keeping goats. For Orlando's poems, there are plenty of receptive tree barks. Oliver is welcomed by the snake and the lioness that help him in his reformation. And for Duke Frederick, the forest sends out an old religious man to convert him.

Now coming to the second criteria of Romantic pastoral, there are plenty of evidences of the comparison between the forest and the court. For example, readers may refer to the introductory speech of Duke Senior in Act II scene (i) addressing his companions in exile. Here through a rhetorical interrogation he asserts that their present state of banishment in the heart of nature is sweeter 'than their previous life in the court. The only adversity they have to face here is the penalty of Adam, the icy sting of the winter wind. On the contrary, Touchstone, after entering the forest,

remarks sarcastically, "When I was at home, I was in a better place" (Act II Scene IV, 13-14).

The interconnectedness of every living being of nature and human beings are expressed in the stories. Respect towards nature is fostered by these stories. Unity among diversity is a condition in which both nature and human beings interact mutually so as to strengthen each other's existence. For human beings to exist and survive, nature is essential. For the smooth and continuous existences of nature, human beings' nature friendly behavior is necessary. In short, symbiosis is a reciprocal condition in which nature and human beings exist harmoniously influencing one by the other. The researcher makes use of the tool of eco-criticism to conduct the research.

Ecocriticism attempts to apply ecological concepts to literary studies. This ecological concept is a way of raising awareness about the dwelling place in literary texts. This kind of awareness is the knowledge that we get about the land or environment. The knowledge about the dwelling place in the literary text is similar to knowing the place or earth. Thus, ecocriticism informs us about the origins of the natural world and the mechanism of the earth as a whole. William Howarth is the famous eco-critic. He has defined the term Eco-criticism in his book some principles of eco-criticism in the following way:

A person who judges the merits and faults of writing that depicts the effects of culture upon nature, with a view towards celebrating nature berating its despoilers and reversing their harm through political action. Ecology studies the relation between species and habitats; eco-criticism must see its complicity it attacks. Although we cast nature

and culture as opposites, in fact they constantly mingle, like, water and soil. (69)

William Howarth is of the opinion that eco-criticism is concerned with exposing the effects of culture upon nature. He cautions the despoilers of nature that the uninterrupted process of harming nature by human beings, ultimately results in the disintegration of human lives. Moreover, he argues that nature and cultures are not hostile to each other. On the contrary, they are interrelated to each other. He has talked about the value and importance of safeguarding nature. The primary importance and necessity of protecting nature is clearly expressed by Howarth.

An appreciation of the natural beauty of the forest is presented through the song of Amiens in Act II Scene (v). The song is actually an invitation to a true admirer of nature to lie down under the greenwood tree 'and enjoy the sweet, joyful song of the birds. Here the only enemy is the adversities of the rough, wintry season. According to the song, this is an ideal place for a person without any worldly ambition, to live in the open air, welcoming the wind and rough weather. Again, a beautiful description of the nature surrounding the sheep-cote owned by Rosalind and Celia is provided in Act IV Scene (iii). The location of the cottage is in the valley, at the outskirts of the forest. Beside it there is a stream that produces murmuring sound while flowing. A row of willow trees, close to the stream leads the way towards the cottage.

The olive trees surrounding the cottage serve the purpose of the fence. Duke Senior too acknowledges the beneficial effects of the forest-*"Find tongues in trees, books in the murmuring brooks, Sermons in stones, and good in everything"* (Act II Scene i L. 16-17). In the last scene, the Pages sing a song in appreciation of spring, depicting a beautiful picture of this lovely season. As this is the season of the lovers,

they too sing in a jubilant state of mind along with the sweet, tinkling song of the birds.

The opening scene in the play shows Orlando and Adam conversing in the orchard adjoined to Oliver's house. Rosalind and Celia are introduced to the audience while they were wandering in the lawn. We meet the other important characters we meet in the heart of uncontaminated nature. The wrestling between Orlando and Charles again betrays the signs of primitive animal instinct. In Act II Scene (iii) the jealous Duke Frederick, threatened by the good reputation of Rosalind among people, banishes her from the court. Celia, out of her love and compassion for her sister, deliberately takes the banishment upon herself, determining to leave the court in disguise. On the other hand Orlando, to get rid of the conspiracy of his brother to kill him, escapes into the forest, with Adam willfully accompanying him. Duke Senior, the father of Rosalind, along with his courtiers has already taken refuge into the forest after his banishment from the court. Now we have almost all the major characters assembled into the Forest of Arden. To be a pastoral, *As You Like It* should consist of description of nature and implicit or explicit contrast between the rural and the urban.

To deal with the issue of disharmony giving way to the greater degree of harmony between characters and nature, the researcher takes the help of the theoretical insight. From the viewpoint of ecocriticism, the researcher makes use of the notion of ecocriticism. To probe the ecological issue in this work, the researcher makes use of theory of ecocriticism. David Pepper is the famous environmentalist. He is of the opinion that the aggressive ideology of the west believes in the idea of conquering nature. It sees the well-being of human beings in the complete conquest of nature. The complete conquest which the westerners believe is the root cause of the

troubled relationship between nature and human beings. Pepper puts forward the following views:

Inevitably, much of the green world view is about society, since it is concerned about the relationship between (Western) society and nature. It often says that we experience environmental problems because, at root, we have undesirable values about nature. This link with the undesirable way that, individually and in groups we value and behave towards each other need to be understood prior to taking a crucial decisions. (19)

Pepper's main proposition is that the existing values about nature and nature – human relationship are not compatible with the notion of preserving nature. The aggressive idea of conquering nature for securing human prosperity is the root cause of the environmental hazards. So long as idea of being compatible with nature does not come in human mind, the prospect of hugging woods does not arise. The existing notion and ideology favors our temptation to log woods. If this sort of prevailing view is not corrected, it would create trouble for the existence of human beings and nature both.

The description of nature in *As You Like It* links the play to the Pastoral tradition. The beauty, serenity, and purity of the environment in the forest make it inappropriate milieu for the flourishing of love, one prominent theme in the play. The path to this idyllic setting is marked, by reference to birds as in the verb "flock" (202). It is true that the cruelty to animals, the doubt thrown upon the longevity of love, and the discussion of greed and violence in *As You Like It* may deconstruct the view that in nature man leads a perfect life enjoying happiness and harmony with his surroundings; the picture of life propagated by the Pastoral tradition. However, the

healing power of the forest brings about balance and restores order in the palace with Duke Senior reinstated as King at the end of the play.

The forest in this case is a return of the characters seeking asylum away from injustice and persecution in the world of the palace. The forest is a place where they, as Celia puts it, "go in content/to liberty and not to banishment" (I, iii, 134-5) in spite of Rosalind's fear that they may be in danger if they travel that far, being young and beautiful. Their plan is to go in disguise: Rosalind as a young man and Celia as a poor country girl. The journey into the forest provides them with the chance to develop happy love stories and eventually to marry their lovers and everything ends for them on a happy note.

The interconnection between humans and nature in *As You Like It* is revealed through the use of imagery. Images of animals, birds, and plants are used extensively to refer to human beings and music and singing permeate the atmosphere of the play. Duke Senior refers to Jacques as being "transformed into a beast" (II, vii, 1), Orlando describes himself as being like "a doe" going to find his "fawn" to give him food (II, vii, 28), and Celia speaks of her relationship with Rosalind as similar to that of "Juno's swans" (I, iii, 72). Other examples include to reference to "fat sheep" (III, ii, 27), "the ewes and the rams" (III, ii, 77), "the ox", "the horse", "the falcon", "the pigeons" (III, iii, 72-3), and the "green and gilded snake" about to attack a sleeping man under a tree but upon seeing Orlando, "it unlinked itself, And with indented glides did slip away" (IV, iii, 108-112). These images affirm the interconnectedness between human and non-human creatures seen and propagated by Ecocriticism.

Literature becomes an organized mode of expressing what human beings feel and experience out of their interaction with nature. Gred Garrad mentions the

following views with respect to the connection with literature and physical environment:

What then is ecocriticism? Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies. (33)

The exclusive concern of ecocriticism is to examine how nature is reflected in the literary works. While examining the ways nature is reflected in literary works, the ecocritics try to bring into light what sort of viewpoint and value system operate behind the representation of nature. In this regard it seems ecocriticism is a political mode of analysis. Ecocritics generally tie their cultural analyses explicitly to a green moral and political agenda. In this respect, ecocriticism is closely related to environmentally oriented developments in philosophy and political theory.

This bond is further emphasized in Rosalind's words describing how she and Celia relate to the forest as "the cony that you see dwell where she is/ kindled" (III, ii, 327-8). However, the forest may also be dangerous as in the description of the lioness about to attack Oliver, "with udders all drawn dry, / lay couching, head on ground, with catlike watch" (IV, iii, 114-5). The image of harmony and peacefulness in Rosalind's words stands in opposition to the image of peril and death in Oliver's account. Oliver's intentions are detected by nature. Therefore he cannot enjoy safety in the forest.

Celia and Rosalind go into the forest seeking asylum away from the injustices of the courtly world. They bring no harm to nature. They manage to settle in. their

house is presented in terms of nature imagery, "[a] sheepcote fenced about with olive-trees" (IV, iii, 76). The idyllic existence suggested in this image of the house finds expression in the sound imagery in the music and the songs which fill the play. Duke Senior asks for "some music" and requests Amiens to sing" (II, vii, 173). The same image is suggested in Touchstone's desire to "rime" (III, ii, 94), in Celia's wish to "sing" her song without interruption (III, ii, 242-3), and in reference to the "sweet bird's throat" in Amiens's song (II, v, 4).

The sweetness of the love poems Orlando writes and hangs up the trees contributes to the magic atmosphere of the forest and emphasizes the bond between man and nature as is seen in Orlando's statement that the "trees shall be...[his] books" where he will post his thoughts and give expression to his feelings" (III, ii, 5). Deposed Duke Senior is not killed. No civil war ensues after his banishment. He moves to the forest which stands in direct contrast to the corruption of the courtly world. Duke Senior's words describing his life in the forest are evidence enough: "And this our life exempt from public haunt, Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, Sermons in stones, and good in everything" (II, i, 15-17). The ecological principle of the unity between all components of life on Earth is apparent in Duke Senior's words.

The senior duke is free from the restrictions of the courtly world and the complications of the realm of politics. He lives in peace. The four love stories described in the play flourish with the four couples. Orlando and Rosalind, Celia and Oliver, Silvius and Phoebe, and Touchstone and Audrey get married at the end. The festivity at the end of the play re-emphasizes the sense of harmony suggested in Duke Senior's commentary on life in the forest. The forest is also a nourishing place. There people are fed literally as in Duke Senior's invitation to Orlando to "Sit down and

feed, and welcome to our table” (II, vii, 105) and in Amiens's intention to seek the Duke because "his banquet is /prepared" (II, v, 60-1). On the spiritual level, in the forest "The sight of lovers feedeth those in love" (III, IV, 53). Food imagery in the play is significant as it raises the issue of sustenance and survival.

What brings pleasure to human beings incurs disasters to animals and other species of jungle. This line of thinking is further elaborated by another ecocritic Timothy W. Luke. Timothy W. Luke is an eminent ecocritic. He argues that our daily activities and events produce profound effects in our relationship with nature. The productive activities, consumption pattern, political maneuvering and other conflict-oriented upheaval produce effect in nature-human relation. Hence, such activities need to be rationalized and brought to the domain of ethical approach. Timothy Luke puts forward the following conclusion:

Many styles of ecologically grounded criticism circulate in present-day American mass culture, partisan debate, consumer society, academic discourse, and electoral politics as episodes of ecocritique, contesting our politics of nature, economy, and culture in the contemporary global system of capitalist production and consumption. As these debates unfold, visions of what is the good or bad life, where right conduct or wrong action for individuals repose, how progress should or should not be realized. (17)

Ecocriticism has become a common genre of analysis. It is mobilized for and against various projects of power and economy. It seeks to expose how power and ideology operate in the organization of our everyday existence. In the spectrum of several ordinary activities of human beings, aggressive approach to nature is reflected. From

micro level, such aggressive advance towards nature and biased outlook on nature-human relationship should be corrected.

Movement from the realm of the courtly world to the forest in the play raises the issue of the antithesis between nature and culture. It is an important concern within the framework of the eco-criticism. Therefore the pastoral retreat from city life was key motif in Renaissance poetry. In the play, the forest becomes the dwelling place of those who have problems in the courtly world. They are looking for respite away from the evils of the palace and the circles around it. The forest provides them with a safe haven where regeneration and self-regulation are possible. The balance between white daisies and black daisies is reflected in the balance created in the play when enough positive power associated with good, justice, comradeship, love, and solidarity is built up in the forest. The realm of the courtly world, where negative vibes reside, becomes weaker with only Oliver and Duke Frederick remaining there. They cross the border between palace and forest with the intention of killing Orlando and Duke Senior respectively. However, both are affected by the milieu of the forest and are changed because of their exposure to its positive vibes. The forest then becomes a milieu where people become better as Oliver admits:

It was I; but it is not I. I do not shame to tell you what I was, since my conversion so sweetly tastes, being the thing I am". This change comes after Orlando rescues Oliver from the lioness that was about to attack him. Finally, the forest is a condition that contributes to the restoration of order and balance as seen in Duke Senior's restoration of his throne. (IV, III, 135-7).

Duke Frederick comes to the forest with the intention of killing Duke Senior. He meets with a religious man. His crown "bequeathing to his banished brother, and all

their lands restored to them again that were with him exiled" (V, IV, 157-161). Along with the restoration of Duke Senior's throne comes there affirmation of the Elizabethan worldview with the King at the top of the political structure.

The forest environment has a major effect upon the characters. Through relations with the world of nature, man becomes more in contact with what matters most in life. Love and justice emerge triumphant at the end of the play. The interconnectivity between man and nature which provides scope for reconciliation and regeneration replicates the self-regulation law upon which the human-nature harmony is established. The characters that move away from the courtly world to the realm of nature go through self-cleansing processes.

The nobleman's son Orlando has fallen in love with Rosalind at first sight. He runs through the Forest of Ardenne. He is mad with love after defeating the court wrestler, Charles. Another reason why he leaves his house is that his faithful servant Adam warns of his elder brother Oliver's plot against his life. Out in the forest, he hangs poems that he has composed in Rosalind's honor on every tree, hoping that passersby will see her "virtue witnessed everywhere" (III. ii. 8). Rosalind enters, disguised as Ganymede. She reads one of Orlando's poems, which compares her to a priceless jewel. The following extract is illustrative of ambiguity and confusion which Rosalind is prone to:

Rosalind: I could find in my heart to disgrace my man's apparel, and to cry like a woman; but I must comfort the weaker vessel, as doublet and hose ought to show itself courageous to petticoat; therefore, courage, good alien.

Celia: I pray you bear with me; I cannot go no further.

Touchstone: For my part, I had rather bear with you than bear you; yet I should bear no cross if I did bear you; for I think you have no money in your purse. (11.iv.35)

Touchstone is a clown who mocks the verse. He is used to claiming that he could easily churn out a comparable succession of rhymes. He does so with couplets that liken Rosalind to a cat in heat, a thorny rose, and a prostitute who is transported to the pillory on a cart. Rosalind rebukes Touchstone for his meddling. Just then, Celia enters disguised as the shepherdess Aliena. She, too, has found one of Orlando's verses and reads it aloud. The women agree that the verses are terribly written, yet Rosalind is eager to learn the identity of their author.

The problematical relationship between nature-human relations needs further scrutiny, which is done by using next theoretical insight. For ecocriticism to be of substance as an interdisciplinary field, it needs to realize that "ecology is not a slush fund of fact, value, and metaphor, but a less than fully coherent area with a very checkered past and a fairly uncertain future" (Dana Philip 54). Many ecocritics would be dismayed to learn that despite ecology's heroic popular image, it has been characterized as a relatively lightweight science by informed observers "whose criticisms of it cannot be dismissed as mere carping even if those criticisms have sometimes been too harsh, above all when other biologists less taken with fieldwork than ecologists are" (Dana Philips 67). In point of fact, ecology has not enjoyed as great a record of success as the other life sciences have. Nor has it always been entirely in line with the ethos prevailing in those other sciences. The divergence of ecology from what is widely regarded as the scientific norm becomes especially clear when it is compared to other significant disciplines.

Celia teases her friend. She hesitates to reveal this secret until Rosalind is nearly insane with anticipation. Celia admits that Orlando has penned the poems. Rosalind can hardly believe it. Like a smitten schoolgirl, she asks a dozen questions about her intended lover. She wants to know everything from where he is to what he looks like. Celia does her best to answer these questions. Despite Rosalind's incessant interruptions, Orlando and his brother, Jacques enter. Orlando and Jacques clearly do not care for one another's company and exchange a series of barbed insults. Jacques dislikes Orlando's sentimental love. They declare it the worst possible fault, while Orlando scoffs at Jacques's melancholy. The following extract is expressive of Jacques's increasing disorientation:

Jacques walks off into the forest, leaving Orlando alone. Rosalind decides to confront Orlando. She approaches him as the young man Ganymede, and speaks of a man that has been carving the name Rosalind on the trees. She claims to recognize the symptoms of those who have fallen under the spell of true love, and assures Orlando that he exhibits none of them. He is, she says, too neatly dressed to be madly in love. She promises to cure him if he promises to woo Ganymede as though Ganymede were Rosalind. ((IV, II, 132-3).

Rosalind vows to make the very idea of love unappealing to Orlando by acting the part of a fickle lover. Orlando is quite sure he is beyond cure. But Rosalind says, "I would cure you if you would but call me Rosalind and come every day to my cot, and woo me" (111. ii. 381-382). With all his heart, Orlando agrees. Here, instead of waiting to be wooed, she adopts the freedom to court a lover of her choosing. Rosalind ends up transgressing the Elizabethans' carefully monitored boundaries of social power.

Intervention on nature is supposed to bring unexpected consequences. Ecocriticism focuses on the fatal consequences of human intervention on nature. Ecocriticism is the study of representations of nature in literary works and of the relationship between literature and the environment. Ecocriticism as an academic discipline began in earnest in the 1990s, although its roots go back to the late 1970s. Because it is a new area of study, scholars are still engaged in defining the scope and aims of the subject. Cheryll Glotfelty, one of the pioneers in the field, has defined ecocriticism as “the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment,” (76) and Laurence Buell says that this study must be “conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis’ (143). David Mazel declares it is the analysis of literature “as though nature mattered. (219)”. Ecocritics study literature written throughout history and analyze its relationship to the environment.

No sooner has the reader gained some understanding of the Orlando/Ganymede relationship than Shakespeare repaints the characters with a different brush. Just as they enter into the charade it seems as though they drop it:

Eschewing the all-important "would" for words that bespeak real urges. "I will be your Rosalind . . . ask me what you Will, I will grant it" says Ganymede. Without pause, Orlando begs, "Then love me, Rosalind. In the world of Arden where nothing is as it seems and most everything is manipulated or ‘played’ with in some fashion, this possibility cannot be ruled out. (IV. I. 147).

Rosalind's commentary on Leander and Troilus serves to illuminate two mythological examples of moral disorientation and coercive power which restrictive society always imposes on individuals. Her standards are impossibly high; she mocks, “These are all

lies. Men have died from time to time, and worms have eaten them, but not for love" (IV. i. 147).

Celia legitimizes her homoerotic desire for her cousin by defining Rosalind as her emotional twin and conflating her identity with her "sweet my coz" (1. II. 1). Character's accounts of Celia and Rosalind's relationship underline their extreme intimacy, for, as Charles the wrestler says, "Never two ladies loved as they do" (I. i. 97). Le Beau tells Orlando that their "loves are dearer than the natural bond of sisters," implying that their relationship is more than familial (I. ii. 254-55). Le Beau's statement provides one example of textual support for a homoerotic reading of the cousins' bond. Celia recounts how Rosalind and she have "slept together" (I. iii. 69), "like Juno's swans Still we went coupled and inseparable" (1. iii. 71-72).

Because of this closeness, Celia's attachment to her cousin constructs her identity and she defines herself in terms of Rosalind. Celia uses the language of marriage to define her identity and legitimize her desire for Rosalind while adhering to the hetero-normative institutions of society. Because no concept of a homosexual identity existed when Shakespeare wrote the play, Celia turns to marital identities to express her desire. She offers her father to her cousin to equalize their love:

Herein I see thou love me not with the full weight that I love thee. If my uncle, thy banished father, had banished thy uncle, the Duke my father, so thou has been still with me I could have taught my love to take thy father for mine. So I wouldst thou, if the truth of thy love to me were so righteously tempered as mine is to thee. (1. II. 6-11)

This exchange of fathers could only take place through a marriage between Rosalind and Celia. Rosalind would take Celia's father as father-in-law. Shakespeare frequently conflates 'Father-in-law' with 'Father' throughout his plays. Celia even tells Rosalind

that when Duke Frederick dies, “thou shalt be his heir, for what he hath taken away from thy father perforce; I will render thee again in affection” (1. ii. 16- 17). By making Rosalind her heir, Celia establishes a bond akin to marriage, even though no actual ceremony has taken place.

Ecological awareness has come to mean not only the application of ecology and ecological principles to the study of literature, but also the theoretical approach to the interrelational web of natural cultural and supernatural phenomena. Kumari Sikha discloses the following views:

It began to explore constructions of environment in literary texts and theoretical discourse. Since literature has always conditioned our philosophical understanding of nature, of environment. Even the aesthetic categories by which our feelings for nature are understood the beautiful, the picturesque, the scenic, the sublime, the wild etc. have been defined largely their use in literary and critical contexts. (3)

Kumari maintains that this awareness brings in us a desire to contribute to environmental restoration, not only as a hobby but as a representative of literature. Ecocritics encourage others to think seriously about the aesthetic and ethical dilemmas posed by the environmental crisis. It also deals with how language and literature transmit values with profound ecological implications.

As Celia and Rosalind’s mirroring begins to dissipate, Celia loses the foundation of her awareness of her connection to the redemptive and transformative world of nature. It leads to more and more open silences. When Duke Frederick banishes Rosalind, Celia accepts the same sentence of banishment herself. It emphasizes that because of their closeness. She and her cousin must both be exiled. Rosalind denies Celia’s logic:

Rosalind lacks, then, the love which teaches thee that thou and I are one. Shall we be sundered? Shall we part, sweet girl? No: let my father seek another heir. Therefore devise with me how we may fly, whither to go and what to bear with us, and do not seek to take your change upon you, to bear your grief's yourself and leave me out. (I. III. 92-99)

Celia continues using the marital imagery to posit that she and Rosalind are one. She will share everything with Rosalind, from losing her inheritance to bearing Rosalind's grief. In fact, Celia is the one who first suggests leaving the court and escaping into Ardenne by dressing themselves in poor and mean attire.

This kind of simplistic reasoning makes the same error in judgment as Duke Frederick does when he characterizes the relationship between the two girls as somehow competitive, suggesting that Rosalind's presence dims Celia in some way:

Duke Frederick. Thou art a fool; she robs thee of thy name, And thou wilt show more bright and seem more virtuous When she is gone, Then open not thy lips: Firm and irrevocable is my doom which I have passed upon her; she is banished. Celia. Pronounce that sentence then on me, my liege, I cannot live out of her company. (I.iii.80-86)

Celia does not directly contradict her father's suggestion that Rosalind upstages her. Instead she reiterates that her close bond with Rosalind is absolutely unbreakable and absolutely necessary to her being. But she needn't put into words what she and the audience already instinctively know. Duke Frederick is wrong. Rosalind's presence does not dim Celia's light, nor can it be said that the opposite might occur. Rather, the two girls light one another. One's identity is constituted in relation to the other through love and affect.

Celia speaks authoritatively to Touchstone, commanding that he “Speak no more of her father; you’ll be whipt for taxation one of these days” (I.ii.84-85). She is the one who first calls for Orlando. The scene opens with Celia trying to cheer up Rosalind, who is distressed over the fact that Duke Frederick has banished her father, Duke Senior, from his kingdom. Celia makes a number of rhetorical moves in her attempt to lighten Rosalind’s mood; when Rosalind says to her, “Unless you could teach me to forget a banished father, you must not learn me to how to remember any extraordinary pleasure” (I.ii.5-7). Celia counters, “I see thou love me not with the full weight that I love thee” (I.ii.8-9). She launches into a hypothetical verbal game of ifs, possibilities, and reversals, by which Celia’s father might have been banished by Duke Senior instead. Celia’s metaphor of weights and balances gestures toward the ways in which relationships are continually reinvented and reinvested. At one point Rosalind asks her to answer, with a single world, a torrent of ten questions about her brief encounter with Orlando. Celia laughs at Rosalind’s preposterous suggestion:

You must borrow me Gargantua's mouth first; 'tis a word too great for any mouth of this age's size. To say ay and no to these particulars is more than to answer in a catechism. ... It is as easy to count atomies as to resolve the propositions of a lover. What is to become of me in this state of restlessness? Celia has yet to experience the giddiness, pains, and pleasures of love. She naturally takes a much more skeptical view of love, and so is able to look and comment upon Rosalind’s infatuation in a disconnected. (III.ii.33)

In fact, Celia’s inexperience with falling in love and her consequent dubiousness over the whole game of love and courtship makes her presence absolutely essential to Rosalind in the first half of the play, during Rosalind’s period of emotional and

linguistic development as a woman newly in love. It is their different levels of experience, or inexperience. Celia's rapid rejoinder shifts the conversation away from love and toward verbal wordplay about Fortune and Nature, revealing the intriguing dichotomy between Celia and Rosalind and their preoccupations.

Throughout the first scene in which they appear, the two women are continually conflated and occasionally confused. Duke Frederick them as the single entity "ladies" (I.ii.62) and "your ladyships" (I.ii.14), and when Orlando first speaks to the two, he confuses Rosalind for Celia and addresses Rosalind as the princess who has summoned him (I.ii.17). Rosalind is set apart from Celia as the object of Orlando's affection, as well as the object of the theater audience's attention. Orlando is entirely tongue-tied in her presence, and can only despair to himself, "Can I not say, I thank you" (I.ii.249)? Rosalind seems amused, or perhaps impatient, at his inability to speak. Waiting for an answer from him but receiving none, she takes the bold step to make clear to him that she reciprocates his feelings: "Sir, you have wrestled well, and overthrown / More than your enemies" (I.ii.253-254). Still, he says nothing in return, and so the two cousins leave. Orlando, in Rosalind's wake, despairs over his inability to speak, and asks "What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue?" (I.ii.257-58).

Orlando's sudden onset of love initially overwhelms his capacity for language and develops into clichéd love-struck speech and behavior thereafter. He calls Rosalind "heavenly" (I.ii.289), pins verses on the trees to declare that "From the east to western Index, / No jewel is like Rosalind" (III.ii.88-89), and compares her to famed women of history and mythology:

Nature presently distilled

Helen's cheek, but not her heart,

Cleopatra's majesty,

Atlanta's better part

Sad Lucretius's modesty. (III.ii.45-48)

The artificiality of this role is the outcome of emotive response to Orlando's empty threats of violence with his usual sardonic wit. Duke Senior serenely delivers the aphorism, "Your gentleness shall force, / More than your force move us to gentleness" (II.vii.102-103). Realizing that he has come upon a familiar scene of civilization, Orlando dissolves completely. He says rather piteously, "I almost die for food, and let me have it" (II.vii.104). His following speech indicates a restored Orlando. He asks that the dinner party guests remember times that they "looked on better days," were "where bells have knolled to church," "sate at any good man's feast," and "from their eyelids wiped a tear" (II.vii.13-16). Duke Senior echoes Orlando's language in his response.

To sum up, the world presented at the end of the play is better than the world described at the beginning of the play. The atmosphere of conspiracies, insecurities, and grievances decreases as the characters move away from the restraints and complications of the courtly world into the forest. The forest, a microcosm of the ecological world offers human beings the chance to reconnect with nature. It enlightens and enriches their souls. The play puts forward the notion that there is no hierarchical dualism between nature and culture. Instead both are interconnected and interrelated. The beauty of the forest and its spiritual and healing power bring about change in people, social and political structures.

Shakespeare's Vision of Liberation

The core finding of this thesis is that nature has the power to respond human illness, malady and misery if people are sensitive to the sanctity of nature. A study of

nature as the background and theme in Shakespeare's sonnets and plays has long been the area of scholarship among Shakespearean scholars. But this paper goes beyond the scope of a simple thematic study of nature in Shakespeare's works to an ecocritical interpretation of his pastoral play *As You Like It*. In *As you Like It* Shakespeare explores a range of perspectives on nature and the environment, right from overtly romanticizing and celebrating it to criticizing it because of its harsh realities.

In his use of both the pastoral and the counter pastoral Shakespeare questions the notion of an ideal nature in the countryside as a general perception present at that time and points out that our understanding of nature is instead rather subjective. In William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, Duke Senior, Amiens, Jacques, Touchstone and the shepherd Corin experiences and understands the reality of Nature in the Forest of Arden in very different ways. William Shakespeare's genius who ranged over the expression of the widest gamut of issues, emotions, passions, feelings and desires in his plays was not singularly free from his concern about nature and environment. A study of nature as a background and theme in Shakespeare's sonnets and plays has long been the area of scholarship among Shakespearean scholars.

This study goes beyond the scope of a simple thematic study of nature in Shakespeare's works to an ecocritical interpretation of his pastoral play *As You Like It*. This work delves into the idea and perception about nature and environment present during the period of Shakespeare and to understand the reasons behind such a belief. It points out that the idea and concern for nature is rather subjective, relative and is shaped by one's social and cultural experiences amidst nature.

The Forest of Arden in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* was a real forest in Warwickshire, England which might have captured the attention of the contemporary urban audience as a modern day locus far from the environmental problems of the

then London. However, 'Forest' in Elizabethan England was not necessarily vast stretches of woodland, but may have also included pasture, sparsely populated tilled and untilled lands- England in Shakespeare's time was not much forested than it is now. It is tempting to try and make some distinction between the forest, where the Duke hunts and lionesses couch, and the cleared land, where Corin keeps sheep. Audrey fetches up her goats, and Rosalind and Celia live like fringe upon petticoat. Shakespeare would be familiar with such usage with reference to the Warwickshire Arden, by his day barely forested at all.

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