



Interpretation of Ecofeminism by Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies in Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*

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Abstract

The author discusses the research based on admiration and respecting nature, destruction of the environment, revenge on nature, issues of Black Women, and modern technologies. The Key Terms of my paper are love and care for nature, and Demolishing both women and nature. The aim and scope of my manuscript are the opinions and understandings of prominent eco-feminists like Vandana Shiva from India and Maria Mies from Germany, as well as their views, which are discussed in Morrison's A Mercy. Shiva and Mies explained the exploitation and liberation of both women and ecology.

Keywords: Ecofeminism, Vandana Shiva, Maria Mies, Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*.

1. Introduction

According to Vandana Shiva, "The liberation of the Earth, the liberation of women, the next stage towards freedom is the emancipation of all humanity. It is the next step of peace that we must strive for we must innovate". The author expressed the illustrations and interpretation of Shiva and Mies in the fiction of Toni Morrison's *A Mercy*. Both Shiva and Mies compared ecology and women through various elements such as political, economic, chemical, scientific, technologies, computer networks, modern systems, and movements. Toni Morrison's Original name is Chloe Ardelia Wofford. She is the best and first Afro-American woman to receive Nobel Prize for Literature in 1993. Morrison's ninth novel, *A Mercy* published in 2008. Morrison's *A Mercy* has many themes such as slavery, discrimination, domination, sexism, rape, revenge, and alienation. Morrison is one of the noted fictionists and her novels suited almost covered many themes as well as literary theories and criticism in various aspects. The author discussed *A Mercy*, a novel connected with nature and women with the interpretations of ecofeminists, Shiva and Mies.

1.1 Literature Review

The reviews of certain important writers related to the title, Ecofeminism, Destruction, and Esteem nature of the environment, and women. The research paper reviews are included. Shaista Maseeh's definition of ecofeminism and ecocriticism. Maseeh discussed the novel *A Mercy* by Toni Morrison on the topic of Ecofeminism. She has included certain



characters like Jacob Vaark, Rebekka, and Regina. Vaark has named his horse Regina. Manasseh inspired the Vaark as he treated the horse as one among his family and named, it Regina.

1.2 Ecofeminism

One of the literary theories and criticisms of English Literature is Ecofeminism. Ecofeminism is coined by the French feminist, Francoise D' Eaubonne. Ecofeminism is further developed by the popular ecofeminists as well as renowned environmental activists, Vandana Shiva and Maria Mies. Francoise D' Eaubonne introduced the term called Ecofeminism in 1974 and mentioned it in the book, *Le Feminisme ou La Mort*. Later, Ecofeminism was developed through conferences and common to all persons and their meaning, first ecofeminist conference happened in March 1980 at Amherst the title is "Women and Life on Earth: A Conference on Eco-Feminism in the Eighties". Both Shiva and Mies defined Ecofeminism as the connection between patriarchal violence against women and nature.

Vandana shiva is from South India and she belongs to a theoretical physicist. She is from the Ecology Movement. She focuses on the capitalist people and the nature of the South. Maria Mies is from North Germany. She belongs to Social Scientist. She is from the Feminist Movement. Both the aim and purpose of Ecofeminism, are to express our diversity, the Narrow perspective of Capitalist Patriarchy, and Natural inequality, said in different ways. Shiva and Mies give an example of Ecofeminism, North dominates South likewise Male dominates Female or Transgender as well as Ecology. The word 'ecology was coined by German Biologist, Ernst Hackle in 1869. Ecology is a relationship between organisms and the environment. The purpose of ecology is to maintain ecological balance and minimize the effect of pollution, deforestation, population explosion, the killing of animals, and many other problems. In the lexicon, Ecofeminism is subdivided into Ecological Feminism. Feminism is nothing but women's inequality.

1.3 Nature Esteemed

Lina, Sorrow, and Florens are the slave girls, who worked on Jacob Vaark's plantation. They are considered labourers. They will do their work perfectly and even protect nature with various techniques. The young girls are very conscious about maintaining the plants in the garden. These girls are protecting crops from Night creatures like Black Flies which destruct the crops as well as plants. They knew about the fourteen days of rain which also destroy the crops and also other plants, they might maintain. They remembered the proverb in their mind, "Prevention is better than cure". They protect nature and give honour before destruction arrives. Both Shiva and Mies remembered that the farmer must not suppose to use chemicals such as pesticides, and fertilizers which cause the environment that spoils everything topsyturvy.

1.4 Issues of black women

Shiva and Mies demonstrate rape, racism, domination, slavery, violence, alienation, and discrimination. In Morrison's novels, the Whites have control over Blacks, and the negroes colonized by the whites occupy their lands and destroy their environment which is



known to be Capitalist Patriarchy. The overall control and power under them. Here, in Morrison's ninth novel, *Jacob Vaark and D' Ortego* control the black slaves and especially tortures the women slaves by beating, raping, and doing lots of work burden upon them without rest and even leaving them to care for themselves. Florens is a very young, and teenage girl who was pale black. She abandons the house of D' Ortego who was so hard and once or twice, and more times raped her mother and tortured her. So, her mother was aware about her daughter was not caused by him and D' Ortego itself sold Florens to Jacob Vaark to clear his debts. Rape is one of the outbreaks of violence against gender. Mies expresses that rape is equated to warfare because Black women are colonized by white people through militarism. In the Indian National Song, *Vande Mataram*, the mother is a holy word but the mother was reaped by the colonized people. So, it was termed a painful process by Shiva and Mies. Violence is nothing but beating and harassing in the mode of physical and mental.

In this particular situation, Mrs. Rebekka Vaark and Lina, the native American girl who works as a slave for Vaark's family, both become close and share their lonely feelings and they spend the time with nature admiring it with overjoy and embrace themselves by singing songs like birds with a nice voice and also played a pipe, passed their precious time beautifully. Normally men discriminate against women in ugly glossaries with animals like a pig and so on. During the early nineteenth century, Eugenics techniques are introduced to reduce the breeding of black people. Eugenics, modern technology is also known to be a race. In the novel, *A Mercy*, teenage black girls are suffered from race. Both Shiva and Mies introduce the German Philosopher, Hegel who said, "some of them don't know the values of human, negroes need liberation and to stop the slavery".

1.5 Nature's revenge

Jacob Vaark and D' Ortego are harsh and fierce. Both owners are caused by the nature. Nature revenges D' Ortego by ruining his crops as well as losing his goods under the ship. D' Ortego's plantation is harmed by the animals too. Through these causes, his business flopped and his house was sold to the Vaark family. Nature retaliated against Jacob Vaark with the disease called smallpox and his crops are destroyed by the Black Flies. Jacob Vaark disabled the cattle and also, the horse. Smallpox affects humans due to climate change. At the same time, it comes naturally. The virus of smallpox can stop by biotechnology. No one gave the helping hand but nature shows pity and kindness in its activity.

1.6 Devastation of Environment

In the ninth novel of *Chloe, A Mercy*, Jacob Vaark is one of the main characters who destruct more than fifty trees. Both Shiva and Mies said that devastation happens in the world of various disasters like chemical industries, chemicals and gas explosions, dumping of toxic wastes, using modernized systems such as monoculture, and hazardous use through various food products and many things. The character, Jacob Vaark is compared to the man-made disaster, 'Hurricane'. Hurricane is one of the most dangerous crises of the environment which damages wide to people and the environment. The quality of a Hurricane is destruction. Morrison compared Hurricane to destroying the lives of slave women by men and their trust in their ego and power also.



1.7 Technologies

German Philosopher, Martin Heidegger said that ‘modern technology exists by its essence’ and ‘Human being is so dangerous than modern technology’. Jacob Vaark is one of the cruel characters in the novel, *AMercy*. Vaark is a rancher and dealer in New England. He is a spouse of Rebekka, and master of Lina, Sorrow, and Florens. He is a wealthy person and had a fowl. Fowl is nothing but a poultry farm with modern technology using needles and vaccines. He had a plantation of corn and vegetables. In the USA, the early twentieth century itself was automatic in the Poultry Industry came and it improves the efficiency of increasing protection and protectivity. Both Shiva and Mies introduced the modern agricultural system, Monoculture, and poultry-food production. Monoculture is single-crop cultivation. Monoculture is a creation of technology, not a natural process. It is one of the modern agriculture systems and it helps to increase the food production level. It lacks diversity. It threatens the loss of biodiversity, soil fertility, and environmental pollution. Shiva and Mies said that Monoculture nourished by chemical fertilizers abolished the basis of soil fertility and it will affect the soil, creating soil erosion. Mies and Shiva demonstrate the HYV Monoculture, refer to as High Yield Variety Monoculture. HYV Monoculture is a high-quality seed such as paddy, wheat, maize, Jowar, and sugar cane also included. The Vaark family used a monoculture of sugarcane. It has grown within a short duration, with no more nutrition benefits. Instead, Chemicals like pesticides and fertilizers kill soil fauna and flora.

Conclusion

Nowadays women are very shrewd because they might emancipate from the struggles that they might be facing in the present scenario. All women are educating new things and read a lot as well as make nature a pet like Tulsi Gowda who received an award from the present President, Ram Nath Govind. Tulsi Gowda is an Environmental Activist and seventy-two-year-old woman who received Padma Shri Award in 2020. Women are thinking that Ecology is a great redeemer and comforter, once created by God which provides them with a permanent blessing and harmony.

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