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Anthropocentric Views on Women and Nature through the
Concepts of Gyn/Ecology and Ecofeminism in Anuradha
Roy's *The Folded Earth*

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Abstract: *The Folded Earth*, a novel by Anuradha Roy endeavors to represent ecocritical writing through the journey of her protagonist Maya. Maya is a widow who seeks to make a new life from her unfortunate past by shifting her life from a chaotic city to an adventurous village near the Himalayas, where humans and the natural world live in harmony. The paradigm changes with the landscape impelling the protagonist to comprehend her surroundings from a new dimension, through which the author discusses the politics of ecology, eco theory, and ecocritical writing. Additionally, Anuradha Roy, the novel's author, provides a voice for the subjugation of women in a patriarchal culture. The significance of an ecocentric lifestyle for humans to sustain the natural world is emphasized in this study. This paper aims to throw light on various concerns of women and ecology during the course of the novel such as lifestyle, habitats, routine, education and connection with nature, through various ecocritical concepts such as anthropocentrism, ecocentrism, Gyn/Ecology and ecofeminism. This paper aims to explain the domination of women and nature by a patriarchal society through the concepts of anthropocentrism, androcentric, geopolitics, Gyn/Ecology. Along with revisiting ecofeminism through the concept of Gyn/Ecology. This study uses qualitative research techniques and a descriptive approach. The novel *The Folded Earth* was chosen by the researcher for this study because it highlights the anthropocentric perspective on women and nature and it is reasonable in terms of ecological learning. The primary findings of this study include how the female characters in the novel find every means to live happy lives in harmony with nature in a society dominated by males, as well as how the main idea of Gyn/Ecology highlights the negative impacts of anthropocentrism in the novel *The Folded Earth*. The researcher's implications include raising public awareness of women's oppression and environmental degradation for further study in this area.

Keywords: Ecocriticism; Environment; Gyn/Ecology; Anthropocentrism; Radical Feminism; Ecocentrism

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Introduction

Ecocriticism could be understood as the study of the relationship between literature and environment. Therefore, it belongs to a critical study about nature which enables the readers to be concerned about the environment and promotes awareness among its readers. According to Cheryll Glotfelty, who is a renowned figure in the study of ecocriticism, "Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (Barry, 2009). This indicates that ecocriticism is the study of humans with their surroundings. The term 'Ecocriticism' was first coined by William Rueckert back in 1978 in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism". It was first introduced during the revolution of 'nature study', as Americans used the term 'ecocriticism' whereas the British used the term 'green studies'. The theory largely concentrates on environmental degradation and other ecological concerns and could be in contemporary vogue academia due to the raise in global warming and ambient concerns for the environment as the theory pursues the ecological study of nature and literature. There are various ways through which ecocriticism trails the study of nature and literature which brings in more environmental theories such as anthropocentrism, geopolitics, Gyn/Ecology, ecofeminism etc. This paper primarily aims to focus on equivalent concepts such as Gyn/Ecology, anthropocentrism, ecocentrism, and ecofeminism. As these concepts come under interdisciplinary studies which are known as ecocriticism.

William Howarth is an American writer who has expertise in ecocriticism, environmental literature, and history. His

essay "Some Principles of Ecocriticism" has defined the addressing theory as

Ecocriticism is a name that implies more ecological literacy than its advocates now possess, unless they know what an embattled course ecology has run during its history. Eco and critic both derive from Greek, oikos and kritis, and in tandem they mean "house judge", which may surprise many lovers of green, outdoor writing (Howarth, 2019).

Here William Howarth gives a deep history of ecocriticism and emphasis on the importance of outdoor writing. This emphasis on outdoor writing is relevant as many believe that ecocriticism is a critical interpretation of a text from the standpoint of environmental ethics, therefore the theory of ecocriticism usually opens up with a sense of place. Similarly, the novel *The Folded Earth* which bolsters a strong ecocritical view and unfolds with a sense of place, and that place is the Himalayan mountains. This story is about the ways through which the protagonist's (Maya) wounded mind and heart, are cured by nature. In *The Folded Earth*, the author Anuradha Roy gives more importance to the outdoor environment. As stated earlier, many ecocritics have accentuated the relevance of the outdoor environment and surrounding in an ecological text and one among them is Peter Barry. Peter Barry in his essay "Beginning theory" emphasizes about four areas and they are: "Area one: 'The Wilderness' (e.g., desert, ocean, uninhabited), Area two: 'The Scenic Sublime' (e.g., forest, lakes, mountains, cliffs), Area three: 'The Countryside' (e.g., hills, fields, woods), Area four: 'The Domestic Picturesque' (e.g., parks, garden, lanes)" (Barry, 2009). These are the four types of 'Outdoor Environment' that are

explained by Peter Barry. *The Folded Earth* falls in area three which is the countryside and contains hills, fields, and woods. Likewise, the author creates a picture of mesmerizing scenery of the Himalayan hills through her peculiar choice of words that makes the reader spellbound.

The author of the novel *The Folded Earth* is Anuradha Roy. She is a contemporary author in Indian literature who is constantly using her voice for the improvement of the environment and politics. She is an Indian novelist, publisher, and journalist who was born in 1967. She has written a few novels in which she exhibits excellence in her writing. Her first novel is *An Atlas of Impossible Longing* (2008) which is shortlisted for the Crossword Prize in India and longlisted for the IMPAC Dublin Award 2008. *The Folded Earth* (2011) is her second novel which is shortlisted for the Man Asian Literary Prize in 2011. Her other works are *Sleeping on Jupiter* (2015), *All the Lives We Never Lived* (2018), and *The Earthspinner* (2021). Some novels by Roy are translated into many languages across the world. Most of her novels are predominantly on the concept of environment, social change, community, culture, and inequality. Through her exquisite writing, she portrays the importance of nature for a living. In *The Folded Earth*, Roy paints a vivid picture of India's exciting places (including the Himalayas, Ranikhet, Delhi) through her mesmerizing words. In this tale, the author strives to revere the natural background by discussing the various environmental crisis in the novel. This paper aims to focus on the importance of the environment and people who face threats to their very existence during the course of the novel through various concepts under the theory of ecocriticism.

The novel has a tale that points out that it has a melancholic love story that smoothens the reader's mind. The entire story is about the character of a widow (Maya) who faces betrayal and loneliness in her life. So, she shifts from the chaotic city to the calming countryside near the Himalayas. There, she

encounters a lot of other characters whose livelihoods are surrounded by nature as they keep nature as a central part of their lives. The author has endeavored a deeper and elaborative description of the environment and the surrounding which presents a beautiful description of the Himalayas as they personify nature as human and play a salient role in granting a lively reading to its audience. The various descriptions in the novel are not from mere imagination but are inspired from real-life settings as the author incorporates real-life incidents in her fictional description of the plot. Though the plot is fictitious, an abyssal reading will showcase the clear description of the livelihood of the people who live on a hillside.

Importance of Ecocentric lifestyle

In a parallel part of the novel, the narrator emphasizes the significance of adopting ecocentric living as a collective effort, rather than just a few individuals practicing it. This is because the detrimental effects of materialistic and patriarchal behaviour are profound and they have the potential to disrupt or divert those who aspire to live in harmony with nature. In one instance, Ama sold her goats to the butcher in order to get money and this is witnessed by Maya. She is terribly in shock after hearing the goat Pinki's sound and witnessing Purana calling for the goat Pinki due to the compulsion of Ama and handing it over to the butcher who is taking it to the slaughterhouse. This incident might be in opposition to the policy of zoocentric life by Purana, but when patriarchy is in power, he is left with no choice but to sacrifice his value. After witnessing everything, Maya said to Veer,

I knew the goat that had been taken away by the butcher yesterday. It had a name and a personality. Everything had changed after what I had seen: the way the goat trusted Purana and the butcher, the way it was betrayed. I'd never eat meat again, I said (Roy, 2011).

Though this incident led to the loss of hope and trust faced by the animal world, Maya

decides to be an active participant to bring a change to the situation rather than be a passive observer. She voices her opinion, gives the goat a persona, and decides not to eat meat because she believes animals have personality and life.

Geopolitics and Gender

As discussed earlier, the hillside landscape places the novel in area three. An understanding of this placement could be enabled by comprehending the concept of geopolitics which comes under the broad ecocritical umbrella of environmental politics. According to the Oxford Learner's Dictionaries 2024, geopolitics means "The political relations between countries and groups of countries in the world, as influenced by their geography; the study of these relations". In brief, geopolitics is a political effect on geography, which impacts land, sea, and climate. There are various incidents of geopolitics in the novel. For instance, in chapter nine, the author delineates the town Ranikhet.

The house was built in the nineteenth century by the British, without architects or building plans. They made enormous stone mansions with chimneys and attics, fireplaces, and mantelpieces, but also deep verandas and tin roofs. To the extent that it was possible in distant India, they recreated their remembered Scotland (Roy, 2011).

Historically during the colonization of India, the Britishers did some changes in the surrounding, to make them feel as if they were in their motherland. These geographical changes were an impact of colonization. The author elaborates on how the manmade change to nature was affected even after the colonization. In part two, Chapter One, Diwan Sahib talks about the 1971 Bangladesh war with Maya. This narration showcases the lasting impact of war on people's lives as it not just influences the geography of a particular place, but alongside it affects their sense of self, as people not just lose their land and borders but their home, lives, belongings,

etc. "We are literally making our own future, and the consequences of these reconsiderations are profound for politics in general and security in particular" (Dalby, 2014). The Bangladesh war made the same impact as they fought for the borders. This kind of geographical change is called geopolitics. By remembering this war and the landscape change, the narrator is postulating the importance of creation and an ecocentric world as mountains, seas, and rivers must be protected by human beings. Geopolitics studies suggest that adopting an ecocentric approach to living would result in a more peaceful existence. Ecocriticism posits that a self-centered existence will ultimately result in devastation.

These incidents in the novel showcase how patriarchal society tends to change nature according to their personal comfort, but on the other hand, women tend to stay close to nature and they like to blend with the ecosystem. It proves women usually enjoy nature as such, but men like to bring changes to it.

Violation through Anthropocentrism to women and nature

As the plot progresses, few characters in the novel think that human beings especially men are the supreme species of other living organisms, which falls under the belief of anthropocentrism. Anthropocentrism means believing that human beings are the center of the world and behaving accordingly, some refer to this term as human exceptionalism as this kind of behavior leads to nature exploitation. "The Anthropocene is a troubling concept for troubled times. It speaks of a complex, interconnected and unstable world marked by globalized and manufactured risks that now are threatening the very life-upholding systems upon which human civilizations rest" (Lövbrand, Möbjork and Soder, 2020). Peter Barry, an ecocritic says that "no true wilderness any longer exists on the planet, for every region is affected by global warming, and other 'anthropocentric' problems, such as toxic waste and nuclear fall-out" (Barry, 2009). These lines indicate

that toxic waste, industrialization, and pollution are created due to anthropocentric ideas which lead to environmental problems created by human beings for their own materialistic benefit which is now badly affecting the environment. This way of living automatically portrays the supercilious mindset of humans which led to the practice of their ruling system above all other organisms in the universe. “The Anthropocentric view of human beings could be bounced back at human beings” (Karen, A. and Christopher, G., 2022). This practice in the long run will severely damage the environment like the change of agriculture to industrialization that led to the destruction of various crops and created land pollution. “Apparently, it is a manifestation of anthropocentric hubris to believe that human appearance on earth is the final stage of evolution, simply because no one knows for certain the future trajectory of evolution despite the present domination of the planet earth by human beings” (Shotunde, 2020). Certain characters in the novel follow the anthropocentric idea as they plan to set rules for animals on hillsides. In Chapter Ten, the hotel manager throws a party at Aspen Lodge where high-profiled people like generals, brigadiers, and bureaucrats are invited to the party. Suddenly a herd of cattle jumped into the party accidentally due to the lethargic behavior of Purana who is taking care of the cattle. The high-profile people at the party ill-treated Purana and his cattle. Mr. Chauhan said that “I’m going to lock you up! With your damned cows and goats!” (Roy, 2011). Considering the example, the readers witness the supercilious behavior of humans over cattle. Mr. Chauhan even placed a signboard for the cattle stating that they cannot trespass. People try to draw a circle for the cattle to live and eat. Mr. Chauhan and others in the party showed their anger towards the cattle because they accidentally invaded their place but the universal truth is that humans are invading the animal space by throwing a party on the hillside but in return, the animals never

vented out their anger on humans nor behaved as cruelly or brutally as humans.

The act of invading the nature space continuously takes place in the plot of the novel indirectly signifying this egocentric practice in the real world. In another instance, “And went off to inspect the site of a new amusement park, his flagship project, for which a swathe of the oak forest was being cleared” (Roy, 2011). These lines in the novel depict deforestation which again showcases human beings’ cruelty towards nature. These officials in the novel cut down an oak forest for their own happiness. This environmental threat was started back in Plato’s age as he states “severe deforestation, and lamented the loss of fertile soil and defaced landscape” (Wapner, 2010). The growth of environmental awareness has gradually increased because a vast amount of misuse of natural resources by human beings has led to the catastrophe of the whole environment and civilization. Likewise, the novel not only throws light on the beauty of nature but also mentions the catastrophe and the threat of existence that is faced by the Ranikhet village, especially women and nature. The novel comments on the brutality of deforestation when Diwan performs in the St. Hilda convent before the students which he has been doing for so many years. He conveys about deforestation that is going on in Ranikhet. Diwan says

“But no animal comes to spur now,” Diwan Sahib said. “There are trucks that come and go, the entrance to the spur is piled high with logs from trees that have been cut from the forest all around. Have you ever heard the sound of a tree being cut with saws coming apart at the trunk and falling?” (Roy, 2011)

Here Diwan is imparting how humans, in specific people in power, are destroying nature for their own welfare to children who is the future of our country. On the other hand, Purana is feeding a deer one day and he lost the deer, the higher officials took that deer to their place and arrest Purana for having a deer in his house. But in reality, he

saved the deer from the predators in the forest. The deer was taken to the zoo, it lasted only for the thirteenth day and it died of malnutrition. The zoo is created for wildlife welfare but the novel portrays incidents where people lock the wild animals in the zoo for their own pleasure. These instances portray the cruelty of anthropocentric behavior. “The relationship between two motives underlying environmental attitudes was examined: ecocentrism Valuing nature for its own sake, and anthropocentrism valuing nature because of material or physical benefits it can provide for humans” (Thompson and Barton, 1994).

Nature and Gender-centred view in the novel

The novel not just condemns ego-centric behavior but also teaches various ways to take care of the environment by incorporating various ecological concepts such as environmentalist and pantheism. Environmentalists refer to people who selflessly take care of their environment and it is visible in the novel as there are some characters like Diwan who enjoy nature and protect the environment of Ranikhet. In India, there are people who still worship nature as God, and that ideology is also indicated in the novel. This ideology comes under the theory called ‘Pantheism’, this theory believes in worshipping the universe as God. Ramesh who is an economics professor said these lines at the party, “No, no, Brigadier! Cows are holiness apart natural lawn mowers” (Roy, 2011). This dialogue indicates that Indians see cows as holy gods. Similar to Indians, Africans also worship nature as their God which has always been a significant aspect of their literature. Writers usually tend to write about aboriginals, tribes, and their customs, their relationship with nature, and their cultural connection with nature. Therefore, by prioritizing nature and emphasizing it as the focal point, one may effectively promote ecocentric views. The term ecocentrism is totally the opposite of anthropocentric. Ecologists and environmental philosophers use this term to manifest the nature-centred view. This nature-centred view always

contradicts the man-centred view. Aldo Leopold is an ecologist who is a prominent figure in environmental studies. He came up with the thought of ecocentric back in the 1940s. In anthropocentrism, they believe that man is above nature whereas in ecocentrism they believe man is part of nature. It also leaves a piece of thought that man is embedded in nature.

Ecocentrism sees the ecosphere comprising all Earth’s ecosystem, atmosphere, water and land as the matrix which birthed all life and as life’s sole source of sustenance. It is a worldview that recognizes intrinsic value in ecosystem and the biological and physical elements that they comprise, as well as in the ecological processes that spatially and temporally connect them (Gray J, 2018).

This promotes the importance of ecocentrism by Grey in his research article “Ecocentrism: What it means and what it implies”. In the novel, we can see the villagers peacefully living together with nature. Their only job is to take their cattle to the woods, bring them back safely and protect them from predators. Ranikhet is a beautiful village where people and nature coexisted together. In many places, the sound of nature is mentioned as Diwan Sahib relished in the sound of nature, he even does a performance for children in St. Hilda Convent with the bird’s sound. Diwan’s only companion is nature and Purana’s only companion is also nature. They both find peace when they are with nature. As a result, they give more importance and respect to nature.

Diwan’s hobby is teaching animal sounds and signs to the students of St. Hilda convent. After Diwan’s death, people find that he had a set of cassettes with recorded birdcalls even they notice that he had a pile of books which contain “Anthropology, the folklore of Kumaon, histories of India, handbound volume on the flora and fauna of the Himalayas, record of appointments in the princely state of Surajgarh” (Roy, 2011). Through these collections of books, readers

can appreciate his interest in nature. He gives importance to culture, nature, and society. At the time of Diwan Sahib's death, a sudden gale strikes the place, and the men of the village were astonished at the accident and said: "Diwan Sa'ab has taken a whole tree with him. The forest is mourning" (Roy, 2011). These lines show how Diwan Sahib was close to nature and the whole village knew it. There is another little girl in the village named Charu. Her only job is to take care of the cattle. She does this job very happily. Likewise, all these people keep nature as the central object of their life. The protagonist Maya's husband has died in trekking so she had a bitter past from which she tries to overcome. This beautiful background of Ranikhet nature healed Maya from her worse past. In Maya's life, nature played an important role and she also has a thick bond with nature from her childhood that clearly gets projected in her dream. The Ranikhet village people keep nature as the central part of their life because it is the only source of livelihood for them.

Revisiting the concept of 'Ecofeminism' through 'Gyn/Ecology'

The women characters in the novel are strong and daring. Therefore, the author tries to compare them with nature which comes under the concept called ecofeminism. Ecofeminism is a study of the relationship between nature and females; it usually comes from the branch of feminism. The term ecocriticism was coined by the French writer Fraçoise d'Eaubonne. The other theorist named De Beauvoir is a French philosopher and female activist. She states, "Woman is related to nature; she incarnates it: vale of blood, open rose, the siren, she represents to man the fertile soil, the sap, the material beauty and soul of the world" (Beauvoir, 1953). Beauvoir interrelates nature with females whom she called as open rose and siren. She wrote an essay called "Second Sex". In that book, she talked about different waves of feminism which helps to develop the growth of feminism theory. This book is viewed as a significant work of feminist

philosophy. Many feminists try to commemorate the relationship and connection between nature and women, and this study comes under both environmental and feminist studies. To study this relationship between females and nature is called ecofeminism. "Ecofeminism primarily renounces the patriarchal perspective where man is considered the epi-centre and has complete dominion over every creation" (Karen, A. and Christopher, G., 2023).

In *The Folded Earth*, the author gives importance to two-figures: they are nature and female characters and both are dominated by male society. Here nature is in threat of existence and female characters are dominated by the patriarchal society. During a party in Aspen Lodge an earnest woman asked a question to the brigadier "The woman mustered courage and said, "Sir, what about all this we hear, of army men raping and molesting women in the Northeast – and Kashmir" (Roy, 2011) the Brigadier's reply is "One rotten fruit here or there, Madam, doesn't make a bad basket. We deal with deviants, we do it more swiftly than anyone else" (Roy, 2011). Brigadier gave a negligent reply to her as the hotel manager tried to subdue the woman by keeping her quiet. Here the author brings a real incident to the readers which happened in Kashmir. A woman in the party was very bold to ask such a question before other higher officials to get justice for the poor girls of Kashmir. To study this much cruelty against women also come under Gyn/Ecology which we can list in feminist literary criticism. Gretchen T. Legler in his essay "Ecofeminist Literary Criticism" states that "Ecofeminism literary criticism is a hybrid criticism, a combination of ecological or environmental criticism and feminist literary criticism" (Legler, 2019) Here Legler says that environment criticism and female literary criticism together combine and create ecofeminism concepts. Gretchen T. Legler also states that

Ecofeminists argue that dealing with practical environmental problems is both an ecological and a feminist task

because the use and abuses of the environment that have led to what they see as the potentially catastrophic present are largely due to a patriarchal environmental ethic that has conceptualized land as “women” (Legler, 2019).

He elucidates those practical environmental problems like abuses of the environment and females lead to the catastrophe of the world due to the patriarchal mindset as environmental ethics denotes land as women. In the novel, the Ranikhet village environment is also affected by higher officials. To build an amusement park they plan to destroy a whole oak tree forest and Beena who is deaf and dumb is molested in the forest. Male supremacy ruins nature and female lives without any remorse. These characters show their supremacy over other living creatures as a result of patriarchal and environmental problems.

In some places, Maya’s life is compared to nature. While describing nature the author hides a secret message. “The lopsided half-moon was trapped in a cage of branches” (Roy, 2011). This line is taken from the novel which symbolizes Maya’s life. Maya was trapped in Veer’s love as she struggles to let go of her past life which is symbolically depicted in this line. Likewise, there are a lot of examples in the novel where we can signify the interconnection of women and nature through Maya’s life.

Similar to the enactment of patriarchy over nature, the domination of patriarchy over females is parallelly witnessed through the narration of certain events. Ama told a story of a man whose name is Vikki; he tries to seduce a widow and also tries to get her dead husband’s pension. It ends in the intimidation of the widow to stay still and lie for the sake of her husband. This event infuriates Ama and she asks “How do you trust a man so greedy he wants his wife to be called a widow?” (Roy, 2011). This makes Ama compare men with vultures which is a predatory bird that feeds upon fragile and vulnerable animals. Alongside, Veer narrates a similar story where

a man beats his wife to death. These terrifying stories about male domination show how men ruin the lives of women. These sets of incidents enable a certain kind of criticism which is known as ecofeminism. Similarly, there is also a concept that is similar to ecofeminism which is Gyn/Ecology. Ecofeminism portrays how women and nature are intertwined. Diwan once compares Maya with nature “Our Wild Himalayan rose is turning into a memsa’ab” (Roy, 2011). He also compares Maya with wild Himalayan Rose. This supports De Beauvoir’s words that “woman is related to nature” (Beauvoir, 1953). After establishing the bond, the writers highlight how women and nature suffer the patriarchal structure.

Several critics condemn how women are not let to grow in a patriarchal structure. For example, Ama once says that “But don’t teach her too much. Girls who study too much are no good for anything” (Roy, 2011). Here Charu’s own grandmother is not letting her study more. Gretchen T. Legler in his essay “Ecofeminism Literary Criticism” claims that “Ecofeminists also argue that constructions of nature as female (as mother/virgin) are essential to the maintenance of these harmful environmental ethics” (Legler, 2019). He illuminates that constructing nature as female is indispensable for maintaining a self-centred lifestyle.

Gyn/Ecology Explicit the Brutal Violation against Women

To study the cruelty against women in the novel also come under Gyn/Ecology which we can list in feminist literary criticism. The term Gyn/Ecology comes under the concept called radical feminism. The Book *Gyn/Ecology. The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* was written by Mary Daly. “When Daly introduced the distinction between foreground and background in *Gyn/Ecology*, she introduced a way for women to understand their own experiences of fragmentation” (Daly, 1990). In this book, Mary Daly lays out the oppression of women by patriarchal society and the journey of women’s becoming. She also brings out the

historical barbarous rituals by patriarchal societies all over the world. Where she says,

I will focus upon five specific righteous rites which massacre women: Indian *Suttee*, Chinese footbinding, African female genital mutilation, European witch burning, American gynecology. In examining these, I will seek out basic patterns which they have in common, and which comprise the Sado-Ritual Syndrome. Those who claim to see racism and/ or imperialism in my indictment of these atrocities can do so only by blinding themselves to the fact that the oppression of women knows no ethnic, national, or religious bounds. There are variations on the theme of oppression, but the phenomenon is planetary (Daly, 1990).

Mary Dale brings out the massacre of women around the world and she related with different concepts like Gyn/Ecology. In the novel *The Folded Earth* the readers can witness the massacre of women's minds and physical bodies like environmental deterioration. As mentioned earlier in the story, a child called Beena was molested by a man in the forest. The distressing aspect of the story is that her own mother blames the deaf and dumb child for this incident. "Her mother says it's her fault, she wears tight clothes and goes wandering in the market, and giggle at boy" (Roy, 2011). This saddest part happening in India to this day, by blaming the victim, it led the people who committed the crime to go back to a guilt-free state. The members of the village also fail to stand-up for the victim. Maya is the only person who has the sense to take Beena to the police station. Ama says that Beena's mother will never allow her to the police station. And she also says that "The less this news travels, the better for the girl" (Roy, 2011). The patriarchy not just attacks women but never provide any justice for the various suffering faced by women. They try to keep their women in silence by victim blaming and guilt-shaming. This unjust practise let women to go to a state

of living dead which is faced by every woman in the world. Men seek to put the women in the living death condition. In this novel, maximum women are oppressed by men in many ways which made women to live in the state of living death. Mary Daly in her book *Gyn/Ecology. The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* uses the term 'necrophilia' to explain how men seek to put women in the condition of a living dead state.

To stop this kind of molestation, Daly came up with the term Gyn/Ecology where she says "Gyn/Ecology can be Seen/Heard as a Thunderbolt of Rage that I hurled into the world against the patriarchs who have never ceased to massacre women and our Sister the Earth" (Daly, 1990). In the above sentences, we can see how Daly connects the environmental sufferings and women's oppression by same patriarchal society. She condemns the environmental deterioration and massacre of women which was done by patriarchs in her book. "The term Gyn/Ecology is useful for analysing this kind of subjugation of women and nature in patriarchal societies" (Karen, A. and Christopher, G., 2024).

Writers like Daly condemn the male society with the usage of a sharp word such as in the work, "Patriarchy is the homeland of males: it is the Father Land; and men are its agents" (Daly, 1990). Subsequently, in the novel, we can see how the higher official and politicians dominate women and nature. The protagonist Maya and other sub-characters like Charu and Beena live in a male dominant society and tolerates the supremacy of male domination in Ranikhet. There are few events in the novel narrated by other characters which were not depicted as a scene in any part of the novel but only narrated by other characters. These incidents show the act of violation against women's characters by the patriarchal society. At the end of the novel, when Ama is telling a story about a person called Vikki who marries a widow for money and tortures her every day, the reader is witnessing domestic violence. From the starting till the end the readers can witness

that women were going through some kind of domination in different ways. This kind of violation against women will take the novel into a different dimension. “All of them emerge themselves as ‘New Women’ exhibiting their potentials to subvert male power and at the end celebrating their autonomy in the lap of nature” (Pal, 2022). “Anuradha Roy’s women characters are sowed with the feminist attitude, which is fostered by the social issues they face with strong attitude” (Arularasi and Kumaran 2016). These incidents in the novel substantiate Mary Dale’s view on patriarchy. In her book *Gyn/Ecology* she says “Patriarchy is itself the prevailing religion of the entire planet, and its essential message in necrophilia” (Daly, 1990). She proposes that patriarchy is a prevailing religion that is spreading all over the earth. This kind of strong condemnation against patriarchy has been a part of gynocentric writing. This kind of domination against women supports the theory called ‘Androcentrism’. Androcentrism is considering the male point of view as the centre. Few incidents in the novel prove androcentric views that prevail in this novel. Charlotte Perkins Gilman conceived this term in a debate. Andro means ‘man’ and centrist means ‘centric’. In anthropocentrism, males dominate the entire world but in androcentrism patriarchal society dominates women. “Androcentrism refers to the propensity to center society around men and men’s needs, priorities, and values and to relegate women to the periphery. Androcentrism also positions men as the gender-neutral standard while marking women as gender-specific” (Bailey, 2019). Here Baily postulates the facts of androcentrism in his research article “Is Man the Measure of all Things? A Social Cognitive Account of Androcentrism”. The readers can witness this kind of concept-oriented work in gynocentric writing.

Conclusion

The Folded Earth by Anuradha Roy is written from a gynocentric perspective. When women discuss this, we are able to see the

true colours of their pain, which is often more authentic and visceral than that of males. Gynocritic writing is attempted by female authors such as Adrienne Rich, Arundhati Roy and Sylvia Plath. Among this group, Adrienne Rich is a radical feminist. Similarly, nature has also been a part of certain author's writing, which shows that concern for the environment is always real. “The author Anuradha Roy glorifies the beauty of the Indian environment and also creates awareness about the ecological catastrophe” (Augustus and Gnanadurai, 2024).

The growth of environmental degradation could make the world look back on the theory ‘Ecocriticism’. Likewise, this paper aims to highlight that the world may be moving towards material abundance, but this book illustrates the threat to existence by discussing various of ecocritical concepts, including ecofeminism, ecocentrism and anthropocentrism, which prevails as a wake-up call for the future generation.

The novel *The Folded Earth* picturizes the Indian environment, culture, society and communities which evolves as the central thought of the novel. “*The Folded Earth* successfully engages its readers with numerous longstanding debates like the inseparable connection between women and nature as well as the destruction of the environment, in a truly human and emotive way” (Francis, 2022). The paper has been crafted to view the core idea in three dimensions. Firstly, the paper gives importance to nature and the novel shows how nature played a prominent role in the lives of women with the examples of few characters. The second dimension is the struggle of women against patriarchal domination and their inner strength to overcome these hardships. The last dimension is looking back at the problems of society in relation to nature and gender. These dimensions are the layout of this paper. These three important matters build up the storyline in Anuradha Roy’s *The Folded Earth*. Through this novel, the paper has explored various concepts, and they are androcentrism,

geopolitics, anthropocentrism, ecocentrism and ecofeminism and Gyn/Ecology.

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