

As You Like It: An Ecocritical Translation

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ABSTRACT

The proposed article reads Shakespeare's romantic comedy, *As You Like It* in the context of vast multidimensional ecological matrix. Man-Nature confrontation through the rhythms of dynamic Nature against inconsistencies of human society has been witnessed. It has tried to evaluate allegorically, whether man conforms to the eco-ethics in order to maintain a harmonic and balanced eco-human resonance. It highlights the intertwined subaltern treatment of women, proletarian, agrarian commune and Nature. It portrays the similarities between women and Nature. It also encounters us with glorified and distorted symbolic association of humans and Nature. It explicates how the play has critiqued civilization's egoistic insane acquisitiveness of the material world to demonstrate its pseudo-supremacy under an illusion of superiority thereby rendering it incognizant of the substantiality and omnipotence of enigmatic Nature. Apart from Nature's significance in human lives, the totalitarian civilization's propensity to exploit and deplete Nature and the 'weak others' inordinately without any concern for their rehabilitation has been projected here. The transformation of eco-antagonism into eco-congeniality to a reasonable extent under the forces of Nature has been documented too. This enterprise is ecologically oriented to derive that Nature employs integrally equitable ways in due course make possible rectifications, revival and restorations.

I

Concerns for the flora, fauna and bucolic have been nurtured and

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voiced incessantly since ancient times. Ecocriticism has distinguished itself, by the ethical stand it takes in its commitment to establishing connections with the natural world. Cheryll Glotfelty defines ecocriticism as "the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment and compares it with other activist methodologies e.g. Marxist and Feminist criticisms."¹ Scheese emphasises that 'Ecocriticism is most appropriately applied to a work in which the landscape itself is a dominant character, when a significant interaction occurs between authors and place, character(s) and place.'² Scott Slovic describes the term 'ecocriticism' as 'either the study of nature writing by way of any scholarly approach or, conversely, the scrutiny of ecological implications and human-nature relationship in any literary text, even text that seem (at first glance) oblivious of the nonhuman world.'³ Michael P. Branch et al explains in *Reading the Earth*, an extensively specific collection in the matter of ethical commitment: 'Ecocriticism is not just a means of analyzing nature in literature; it implies a move toward a more bio-centric world-view, an extension of ethics, a broadening of humans' conception of global community to include non-human life forms and the physical environment.'⁴ *As You Like It* 'is a mixture of comedy and romance, with occasional touches of seriousness.'⁵ Shakespeare, indeed, with the memory of Stratford days revived, 'has painted a picture of a simple, natural mode of life as bright and fresh as ever quickened the weary soul of a worn-out citizen at the very first breath of the woods and the mountains.'⁶ We come across in the play a variety of episodes narrating Duke Senior's banishment by his treacherous usurper brother Duke Frederick, Oliver's malicious depriving his brother Orlando of all provisions he is entitled to, Celia-Rosalind kinship, birth and eventual maturation of Rosalind-Orlando love affair, Orlando's life constantly periled by Oliver's pernicious machinations, Orland's runaway with Adam into the forest of Arden for security, Rosalind's ostracism by Frederick, Rosalind-Celia flight in disguise, all exiled and threatened people's escape along with a band of voluntary escorts into the wilderness for shelter, Oliver's and Frederick's tempestuous reactions at Orlando's and Rosalind-Celia's unpredictable disappearance respectively, celebration of life by these fugitives in realms of Nature free from anthropocentric gaol, bedazing transformation within the evil-mongers on being touched by angelic agents followed by ultimate reconciliation and restoration.

finds solace in the lap of Nature. She genuinely relishes the abounding freedom of Nature far beyond the severe barricades of superficial and extravagant customs of civilized wasteland. She is overflowing with infinite energy, enthusiasm, absolute fearlessness and felicity. The male disguise of Ganymede is Nature's device of camouflaging Rosalind adopts to shield her from the ruthless grip of Frederick and form the risk of being recognized by others. Ecocritically, her disposition and actions marks her as an entity having conformed to the Survival of the Fittest touchstone/litmus test. Further, 'a man haunts the forest that abuses our young plants with carving 'Rosalind' on their barks; hangs odes upon hawthorns and elegies on brambles;' (332-335) testifies her stance for preservation of Nature from defilement through her strong condemnation of Orlando's scribbling love poems and odes on the bark of the trees as an act of staining and spoiling eco-graphical beauty and order. Her non-addiction to worldly comforts, benevolent, caring, nurturing and amicable gestures towards human and non-human entities alike reveal her ecological coherence.

Also, at many instances Rosalind's quashing into a commodity gets unveiled in her association with a precious jewel dugout from the core of earth, in her features being colligated with stupefying, though lifeless and arid art objects, in analogising her to a nut with a 'sourest rind' and to a garment that need to be furnished with linings. Eco-analytically, her distress typifies the quandary imposed upon the victims of forced oppression as a consequence of stubborn discrimination practised in society. Rosalind epitomises eco-harmonic efforts towards encouraging equality, respectful and reciprocative co-existence everywhere consistently. Her eco-sapience gets expressed in her fortitude, diversity, accommodativeness and initiatives to protect herself and her surroundings from getting dilapidated by wayward pursuits in the name of modernisation and progress. She has surpassed civilization's jaundiced views of women through her bold and confident alliance with Nature against man-made schizophrenic pandemonium. Thus, we encounter her uncontaminated eco-coherent cultural values, with which, she tries to nourish, fortify and reinforces a balanced healthy relationship between Nature and human ideologies.

Orlando, the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Bois and brother of Oliver possesses handsomeness and strength of a tiger, laboriousness, determination, patience and activeness of ant, promptness and honesty of horse, kindness of deer, and dove like innocence and lovable qualities. But, according to societal

perception, he has languished without a gentleman's education and training. He gets deprived by Oliver of all familial inheritance he is entitled to lawfully besides being plunged into severe enslavement and incessant abasement. Orlando eco-precisely equates his subjugated and objectified status with that of the yoked animals, and the downtrodden pastoral proletarians who are the victims of eco-derogatory feudal practices. Despite being mal-treated by Oliver, Orlando neither denounces him, nor does he think of avenging or ravaging him for his own materialistic reinstatement. He does not nurture any intention of evoking conflict or harming anybody around. Such disposition of Orlando is not due to his lack of physical strength or courage but because he is more motivated by eco-supportive ideals. There are several evidences that ecologically justify his bravery and great potential, for instance, he wins the wrestling match against Charles, a professional wrestler; he carries fatigued old Adam across the Forest of Arden and later risks his life to save Oliver from a hungry lioness. His victory over Charles stupefies Oliver terribly and shatters his murderous mission of putting Orlando to death. Here, Orlando metaphorically serves as an agent of Nature, which outrageously assaults and disintegrates the distorted rapacious intrigues of egotistic civilization. Orlando's triumph ecologically denotes how Nature devises its ways not only to assert its omnipotence by smashing man's inching forward catastrophic pursuits for eccentric demonstration of power but also to give him an opportunity to get reformed into an eco-compatible entity for universal well-being. Orlando associates himself with a 'doe' and old feeble Adam to a 'fawn'. The pitiable condition of ancient and loyal Adam drives him to intercede aggressively, like a lion, into Duke's party for food. Such behaviour of Orlando can be ecologically paralleled with parent's desperate and relentless ventures intended to feed their offspring. Here, Orlando's entire focus upon preservation of life as the only priority of the moment marks him as a committed sustainer like Nature. His rescuing Oliver projects his magnanimity of bull, kinship of elephant and forgiveness of lamb. Orlando's candid talk with Oliver about the legal injury, the latter has afflicted the former with intends to prick his conscience just as Nature keeps warning capitalistic civilization in different ways regarding the aftermath of damage caused to it by them. He adapts himself with his surroundings, whether it is amidst the tortuousness of civilization or in Nature's tranquillity. He is eco-amicably consistent, adaptable, modest, righteous and rational. Orlando's training as a peasant has given him an opportunity of being intimate with Nature

far from the clumsiness of man-made confinements; resultantly his integral psyche has been much influenced by Nature. His voluntary exile symbolizing an escape into Nature gives him relief from an existential crisis he was confronting in the urban sphere. However, a pale shadow of materialistic discontentment is encountered in Orlando's sad expression that the domesticated oxen and horses are well fed and kept in Oliver's household than he is. Orlando's remarks, that the domestic animals lead a better life than him, demonstrates man's eco-blindness towards the real plight and distress of harnessed animals in a man-manuevered area away from their natural habitat. It indicates metaphorically man's innate urge for obtaining the synthetic comforts and conveniences despite his cognizance of their superficiality, illusiveness and temporality, perhaps because he is an inseparable entity of civilization. Again, by nailing his poems to the trees of Arden, and hanging verses upon hawthorns and prickly bushes as testaments of his love for Rosalind, Orlando has disfigured the trees and tarnished the forest. Here, he has violated nonhuman entities and employed them as lifeless communicatory devices insensitively to manifest his overflowing emotions. Orlando's mindless ignoring of eco-pragmatic significance of the flora attests civilization's callous approach towards deforestation in quest of expanding its territory, of declaring its authority, all obscured beneath excuses of necessity. Though a glimpse of materialistic orientation is visible in him, yet his values reveal him as a predominantly eco-congenial individual amidst all adversities and frigidities.

Duke Senior, Rosalind's father and the rightful ruler of the dukedom, having been banished by his usurper brother, Frederick, now lives in exile in the Forest of Arden with a band of loyal noble men. Despite being betrayed by his treacherous brother, Senior has not shown abusive or militant disposition against Frederick to retain his dukedom, and has abstained from any conflict to obviate the possibility of eco-antipathetically fatal consequences. His flexibility is integrally encountered in his unstrained acceptance of all undulations in his life as a part of destiny, which he considers a design of Nature. He intends to make the most of whatever fate imparts to him. He reveals a calm and let-go-attitude of a snake. No grievances and frustration for being divested from the worldly glory or any hostility towards his conspiring brother have been evinced. Moreover, he cherishes no intention of conquering forcefully just for the sake of displaying his might. He possesses a positive and optimistic approach towards life distant from sheer

mercenary accomplishments. His banishment from the dukedom into exile can be ecologically interpreted as his freedom from mechanical selfish culture of pseudo-progressive civilization. It simultaneously initiates his escape into the tranquil, fresh, versatile and open domain of Nature. Nature aids him in reading the radical difference between trueness, simplicity, practicality, soundness, magnanimity and plainness of a natural environment and the pompous, superficial, artificial, hypocritical, deceitful, malicious, insane, self-centred, conceited, pedantic, prejudiced, covetous facet of civilization that rampantly dominate and pollute the environment. Nature also makes him amply realize the indispensability and inevitability of interdependence among the entities in an ecosystem. He strongly believes that both human and non-human forms of life are equally significant, hence, learns continuously the ways of survival amidst all severities like the nonhuman entities do in the forest. For instance, to him, the adversity has its rewards 'like the toad, ugly and venomous, / Wears yet a precious jewel in his head'. (2.1. 13-14) He claims that one can find as much lessons and messages in all natural objects as one would in a church or library: 'Find tongues in trees, book in the running brooks, / Sermons in stones, and good in everything'. (2.1. 16-17) His spending a jovial, peaceful and contented life in the forest and his appreciation of such a lifestyle that is bountiful and pleasant in the natural green environment is vividly visible. He is a friend and sympathizer of the downtrodden, the subaltern, the indigenes and the commonplace. He has eagle-like considerateness, bear like dignity, strength, introspection, spiritual wisdom and healing abilities, beaver's power of building, buffalo's endurance to overcome, emotional courage, stability, provision helpfulness, determination and confidence besides optimism of a humming bird. A bull's magnanimity gets mirrored in his forgiving reconciliation with his repenting brother who had once been wicked to him. He portrays lion like royalty, nobility, justice and progress, yet humility bestowing blissfulness around in his demeanour is undeniable. He suggests that rituals and customs should be so configured that it does not barricade one from the natural world but should be eco-compatible instead. It exhibits his undisputed adaptability, impartiality, ecological gratefulness and awareness to a large extent. In the end he affirms his reinstatement in his dukedom, but it need not be marked as his yearning for the same; rather it is an eco-judicious step towards vacating the green sanctuary which they had encroached once helplessly for escaping the ominous hazards inflicted upon them by autocratic

imperialism. Thus, a panoramic view of his comprehending Nature's mysticism, philanthropy and omnipotence is obtained in his total compliance with Nature's sovereignty.

Jaques, son of Sir Rowland, a faithful lord willingly accompanies Duke Senior into exile in the Forest of Arden. He is prone to contemplation, but lacks zeal and enthusiasm to execute his imagination into action because he is overwhelmed with despair. His constant melancholic disposition and pessimism, an aftermath of psychological distortion, is born of morbidity and bewilderment in constricted man-made arena where he has grown up. He refuses to participate wholly in social life but has much to say about the foolishness of those who surround him. He opines that misery, distress, poverty, dishonesty, injustice, tyranny and many such social vices coupled with civilization's consumerist practices are corroding away the organic world gradually. He accuses 'fat and greasy citizens' for the eco-impoverishment in the human society through his sarcastic criticisms of the mercenary world. He condemns all materialistic pursuits as prodigal, trivial and problem-evoking agents. After experiencing civilization in all its myriad hues of ostentations, which he treats as his one of the most strenuous, bitter and malign experience, he finds relatively more comfort and solace in the solitude of Nature's sanctuary. When he says, '...give me leave / To speak my mind,' (2.7. 58-59), it suggests that he gives prime importance to energies of his instinct by not discarding his intuitive feelings as an irksome bundle of fairy tales and relic of superstitions. 'I will through and through cleanse the foul body of th' infected world' (2.7. 5960) expresses his indomitable urge to detoxify himself from the contaminative captivity of worldly illusions. Given his inadequacy to participate in life full of affectations, it is fitting that Jaques alone declines to follow Duke Senior and the other courtiers back to court. While other characters merrily revel their happening return, Jaques resolves to assume a solitary and contemplative life of detachment in a monastery with the reformed Duke Frederick to refrain himself from being totally devoured by the existential dilemma he has already undergone under the impact of urban discrepancies. Thus, his unanimous decision of leading a monastic life in pristine placidity resonate his frog and owl like true ancient wisdom and dolphin like spiritual essence akin to deep ecology.

Celia's unconditional and profound attachment with Rosalind gets reflected in her decision to renounce the palace instantly and accompany her into exile. During her entire trip, Celia assumes the

disguise of a simple shepherdess by the name Aliena. Both actions of Celia show her indifference towards the world of luxury and vanity. Her flight into the Forest of Arden and apparelling herself as a shepherdess indicate an urbanized man's urge, after reaching a point of saturation, to retreat into the solitude of magnanimous versatile Nature in search of respite, solace and freedom from the prison of mundane menaces. It implies that she is driven by pastoral nobility more than gross materialism. Her adaptability according to the environmental necessities resembles those of Nature-nurtured tribal, agrarian communities who work towards sustaining harmonious and cordial organic network of life. She is conventional, yet diverse; she has a distinct beauty and a soft gentle disposition along with a serious countenance. A rare blending of eco-dynamism and refinements can be ascertained in her. Furthermore, she possesses undiminished integrity, understandability and non-prejudiced perception unlike her father. It is evident in her falling in love with reformed Oliver, her strong kinship with Rosalind, and her endorsing of Rosalind-Orlando love affair irrespective of the fact that her father dreadfully despises Duke Senior, and late Sir Rowland de Bois, the father of Oliver and Orlando as his enemies. Through her dauntless actions she ecologically registers her concern for the deprived and the suppressed. She understands and righteously disapproves her father's obstinate wrongfulness and irrationality. Celia empathises with Rosalind during her crisis caused by Frederick's sudden banishment of her. She has been always endeavouring to earn justice and equal rights as enjoyed by her for Rosalind and to protect her besides being a perfect confidante to Rosalind. Celia's stability, sensibility, tactfulness, dutifulness and commitment get justified in her eco-amicable ways of perceiving and doing things. Celia's ingenious escapade with Rosalind from Frederick's custody projects evidently her defying the monopolistic patrician patriarchs through her protest against their intertwined impoverishment, exploitation, abrogation, depletion, manipulative commoditization and subjugation of women and Nature. Thus, Celia not only typifies the intertwined harnessed status of Nature and the entire female race but also symbolically voices for the emancipation of both from further ruination thrust upon them by totalitarian imperialism eco-antagonism personified in eco-antagonistic Frederick.

Adam, the elderly servant of Late Sir Rowland de Bois, having witnessed Orlando's predicament, offers not only to follow his young master into exile but also to fund their journey with his life-

time's modest savings. It affirms his abundance generosity of turkey, goodness, nobility, loyalty and trueness of a dog. Sufficiently conscious of the arriving danger in the form of Oliver that intends to devour Orlando, he takes every possible measures right from informing Orlando about Oliver's conspiracy to safely assisting him into the forest with the only thought of Orlando's protection. Thus a bear like motherly affection and protective demeanour juxtaposed with spider's patience and feminine energy reflects in Adam's concern for Orlando apart from alertness of a giraffe. He simultaneously believes in the inevitable and essential eco-ethical philosophy of interdependence. He embodies indomitable willpower and ideologies which seek to arrest the calamity caused and accelerated by avaricious anthropocentric complexities. His sentience motivates him to conform to his mission despite his physical fatigue arising from strenuous issues he was confronting in old age. Here we get acquainted with emotional intelligence, humble persistence and determination of turtle in Adam. He finds respite in the tranquillity of Nature, far from the maddening man-made empire. Feeble Adam has been associated with powerless "fawn" because both need aid to get rejuvenated for survival. Adam represents threatened others who hold subaltern status and are exposed to continuous abuse, degradation, impoverishment, hierarchical discrimination, subjugation and all abhorrent practices against Nature's law of equality. His services have often placed him under the banner of a Nature-like maintenance worker, whose contributions generally remain far from being fairly evaluated, appreciated, remunerated and acknowledged. Thus Adam's depleted state entirely equates him with the undermined ecosphere. But amidst all distress, he establishes himself as an ecologically consistent, righteous, rational, responsible, reliable, adaptable and amicable soul.

Duke Frederick, the usurper of Duke Senior's kingdom allows Rosalind to stay back in the palace only for the sake of his own daughter Celia, who shares an affectionate bonding with Rosalind. Duke Frederick's cruel nature and volatile temper get displayed when he banishes his innocent niece, Rosalind, from the court driven by his sudden prejudice and suspicion. Except his daughter Celia, he hates one and all. Frederick goes to the extent of attempting an odious crime of killing his exiled brother, hence exhibiting his eco-hostile homicidal inclination without any biologically necessary cause. The flight of Celia and Rosalind injures his ego and makes him suspect Orlando's hand in it, thereby enraging him to the verge of his atrociously ordering Oliver either

to hunt for Orlando or be prepared for the confiscation of his property. He is treacherous, dangerous, manipulative, crafty, ostentatious, sadistic, tyrannical, abhorred feudal lord who inordinately afflicts and impoverishes others. Duke Frederick is an eco-antipathetic personification of corruption, conspiracy, instability, violence, recklessness, conflict, autocracy, ingratitude, avarice, hypocrisy and selfishness. He underestimates, demeans and disrespects every entity around him as a result of his being preoccupied with an illusion of superiority. His sinister and ruthless activities mirror his refuting of the fundamental phenomenon of ecological interdependence. His prejudiced mind-set not only makes him harness and extort others, but also renders him apathetic towards their needful replenishment. He aspires to puppet Oliver, Rosalind, Celia and others as inanimate objects and embodies capitalistic totalitarianism. His fanatic possessiveness and rigidity that leads him to resist and condemn changes as audacious rebellion against his decisions originate from his assumed dread of losing his imperium. Furthermore, he always intends to control, repress and butcher others' natural instincts, talent and sentiments in his quest of mercantile objectives. His vague perception, that land and human entities are the objects needed to be conquered for demonstrating power accelerates his desire to become a conquistador, becomes the root cause of his eco-heinous doings. Given that the courtly society is an environment, Frederick has functioned as a lethal menace accountable for colossal chaos, distress and degeneration in it. His boastful aggrandisement of himself and his dictatorial demeanour get reflected in his statement, 'And in the greatness of my word, you die.' (1.3. 85) He ignores the fact that he is a trivial and minimal element in macrocosmic Nature, the power of which can ruin him in no time. Frederick personates the sterile, stale, and stagnant ambiance of a confined man-made place that is extremely eco-derogatory. It is apparent that Frederick so gets lost in the labyrinth of the artificial world, that it heads towards his absolute disjunction from Nature thereby decimating his ecological sapience. However, in the end, there is a miraculous change in Frederick brought about by his encounter with an old religious man in the outskirts of the Forest of Arden. He resigns to the holy man's eco-substantial counselling, which motivates him enough to do the rightful penance through aborting his vindictive murderous mission against exiled Duke Senior and re-crowning him instead, reinstatement of the confiscated possessions to their rightful owners and adoption of a claustral sanctified lifestyle. This sudden transformation in

Frederick should be accredited to benevolent Nature, which devises the pious man as its agent not only to illuminate in him self-realisation required for his emancipation and redemption from the devouring materialistic darkness but also to reform him radically.

Oliver, the eldest son of Sir Rowland de Boys and the sole inheritor of the de Bois estate proves himself as an irrational, obstinate, intolerant, frigid, wicked and biased person in his blunt denial of rightful heirship, education and status to Orlando. He admits to hating Orlando without any reason and goes to great lengths to ensure his brother's downfall. He instigates Orlando to fight Charles, a professional wrestler and thus jeopardises his life. He wants Charles to break "his neck as his finger" and also goes to the extent of trying to burn him alive in his sleep. He enslaves, exploits and commercialises Orlando just like he does with his domesticated animals. Oliver in his pursuit of conquering, all accessible mercenary spheres continues to ravage, deplete, deprive and annihilate others, thus doing injustice to them. Ecocritically, he manifests insane ambitiousness, callosity, envy, covetousness, irresponsibility, corruption, opportunism and quenchless power thirst, which can deform anyone into a rapacious invader. Oliver represents man's mindlessly negating the significance of others in the name of gross progress and modernisation. Likewise, Oliver too becomes a prey in the hands of another autocrat, Duke Frederick, whose threat of stripping him of his worldly possessions on failing to find his missing brother pushes him into the forest for finding Orlando. But instead of finding respite, Oliver feels monotonous, bewildered, strangulated, frustrated, and hence lonely amidst rich biodiversity. He finds himself living in despair in the Forest of Arden, the immensity of which makes him feel paltry and lost. He is so habituated to synthetic comfort zone, that it creates a sort of stilted insulation for him against eco-oriented reality. Initially he does not suffer from any sense of guilt; rather he is in a vexed mental state until Orlando imperilling his own life saves Oliver from the mouth of a lioness incidentally. This unexpected magnanimity jolts Oliver from within and prompts him to ponder upon his mean, ignoble and unpardonable maltreatment of Orlando, makes him feel penitent, thereby metamorphosing him into a more sensible and better person. His somewhat eco-affable transformation is also revealed in his unconstrained love for the disguised Celia, whom he believes to be a simple shepherdess. Perhaps because of his eventual understanding the difference between the anthropocentric negativity in a décor of illusive

glamour and the serene unadulterated bounty of dynamic Nature, his restlessness reduces, and he gets an opportunity to evolve ecologically.

Phoebe's occupation as a shepherdess and her plain dairy-maid like physical beauty depict her pastoral life. The phrase 'Cows dugs that her pretty chopped hands had milled' and that the colour of Phoebe's hand is like that of sand stone imply her industrious self, her experiences of harsh and soothing aspects of Nature, and oneness with the soil. Silvius, the shepherd's rusticity, simplicity, helpfulness and his pure astral love for Phoebe marks his vitality as an advantage of being nurtured by Nature. Phoebe's repeated rejection of Silvius and her falling in love with Ganymede/disguised Rosalind metaphorically connotes an individual's dumbness towards ecological truth under the temptation of following glamorous materialistic fantasies. Later on, when Phoebe realizes that her compassion for Ganymede is futile, she transposes her love to Silvius, thereby implying man's return to Nature for peace and solace after beating blindly against the bush of gross philistinism in vain. Corin is sensitive to the versatility, magnetism, benignity and providence of Nature. It is evident in his finding satisfaction and pleasure in grazing the elves and sucking the lambs. Corin's revelation that he is a slave of his rude and miserly master, the original owner of the cottage, reflects twin colonization and undermining of a laborious, efficient peasant and the resourceful Nature by industrial imperialists. Lord Amiens' loyalty, carefreeness and affectionateness amalgamated with his support for the righteous gets evinced in his voluntary accompanying Duke Senior into exile. Initially, a glimpse of malaise against ruggedness of the woodland life is perceived in him, yet he learns to accommodate eventually evinced by his later appraisal of the same as a domain brimming with merriment where no foe in disguise exists. It adequately conveys that Nature tutors him read the sharp difference between a pretentious milieu full of fraudulence and an open expanse embedded with trueness, purity, sanctity and serenity. Hence he can be counted as an eco-candid person. Audrey is an ignorant country wench who agrees to marry Touchstone, a representative of the urbane because she imagines that it would bring her enormous happiness. Despite possessing an agrarian identity groomed, caressed and aided by Nature, she falls under the spell of infectious faux glitter and her eco-affability gets somewhat marred. Touchstone, a clown in Duke Frederick's court escorts Rosalind and Celia in their flight to Arden with the sole

purpose of protecting them from all possible peril. Here we get acquainted with his dog like bravery, commitment, selflessness and respectfulness. Though inwardly he seldom suspires for the courtly comforts and views staying in wild environment as ordain, yet he complies with the circumstantial necessities for the sake of Rosalind and Celia. Both Amiens and Touchstone oscillate between liking and criticizing their predestined adventure in the forest because of the dilemma arising from bewilderment, obsession, inhibitions and constraints. On one hand they want to escape the monotony of the civilized gaol and on the other they get so steered by the mechanized amenities of a closed cell, that they do feel a bit uncomfortable and alien amidst the vast landscape of Nature. Charles' profession as a wrestler signals violence, yet, his empathy and concern gets mirrored when he requests Oliver to stop Orlando's participation in the upcoming fight with him. He neither has any intention of injuring or harming Orlando nor is he a distorted man. But his preponderant eco-antipathetic flaws such as ego, certitude, greed, contemptuous underestimation of others' competence and indomitable desire of conquest to establish himself as a landmark of powerfulness has been stimulated and exploited by Oliver for accomplishing his wicked enterprise of killing Orlando. Thus Charles' possible eco-ethicality also gets maculated and distorted in corrupt hands. His defeat epitomizes dismantlement of unwise man's illusion of universal undisputed superiority to others. It also implicates preservation of the ecologically righteous through the revival of eco-idealism against claustrophobic burden of sheer worldliness.

III

Moreover, the play acquaints us with many allusions to the natural habitat for defining human merits and discrepancies. For instance, old age to 'a lusty winter'; penniless man to 'a rotten tree that cannot so much as a blossom yield'; Jaques comparing his capability of sucking melancholy out of a song to a weasel's sucking eggs; flow as hugely as sea; creeping like snail; bitter sky; green holly; winter wind, the breath of which is rude, yet better than man's ingratitude; weary Orlando being compared with a dropped acorn under a tree; wedlock to the billing and cooing of pigeons; oak, whose boughs were moss'd with age; Rosalind's associating of Orlando's repeated complaints about love to 'the howling of Irish wolves against the moon'; green corn-field, spring-time and pretty country folks; simple peaceful life as a flower; 'rich honesty in a poor house' as 'pearl in foul oyster' are some of them. The lion, an original

inhabitant of the forest plays a major role in reviving brotherhood between Oliver and Orlando, apart from Oliver's detoxification from philistinism in the process. Man's varying characteristics, temperament and approach have been phenomenally associated with the seasonal cycle of the ecosphere. Man during courtship is colligated with the joyful bright months of April and May, which represent ripeness, efflorescence, beauty, vigour, warmth, energy and enthusiasm. Man's perception after marriage predominantly becomes harsh, indifferent, subduing and aggressive; hence it is symbolically equated with the gloomy, cold, rough, stale, frozen, monotonous and rotten winters of December. Besides, Nature has been found here not only sheltering and purging escapades from materialistic menace but also instructing the escapees in organically pragmatic ways. Worshipping of mythological deities like Juno (the god of wedding) and Hymen (the god who populates every town) emblemize that human life-style, behaviour, tradition, customs, rituals and activities are influenced by the flora, fauna, geography, natural resources and vice-versa. Every non-human creature is unique, has a definite mode of life and plays a significant role in Nature. It is the human beings who often explore, imitate and then adopt as per their necessity and convenience.

Civilization thrives upon the ideas borrowed from zoo-centric creatures' natural modes and techniques of survival, yet it often ceases to rightfully acknowledge the significance of their role. Setting of table in a courtly style, courteous and refined manners practiced by Senior Duke and his company even amidst open greens indicate civilization's failure in abandoning artificiality, a blemish upon natural habitat. Disrespecting and disgracing others on absurd grounds of nationality, religion, race, class and colour, as an eco-ignoble practice of social system has been pictured in the phrase 'Ethiop words', wherein foul words and rustic verses have been associated with Ethiopia, an African country with black natives. Rosalind's comparing Phoebe to herself as 'Like Turk to Christian' indicates her despise for the Turkish and vanity of Christianity. Also, union is not conducted on the basis of natural selection but is manipulated as per man-made norms of which marriage is only a negotiable institution. Such discriminations and stereotype practices highlight prejudices, parochialism, rigidity and mental constraint against Nature's equal and fair treatment of all creatures. 'Ox hath his bow'; 'the horse his curb'; 'the falcon her bells' indicate again the callous yoking of the non-humans for profit and pleasure through economic policy of domestication, thus

obliterating their basic freedom through deracination from their natural habitat as opposed to Nature's ways. The slain deer sustains the survival of civilized intruders with meat to eat and skin to wear in the forest. But instead of being grateful to the venison, one wears its horns upon head, as a sign of triumph over Nature. It also pictures how man under a chimera of conceited supremacy callously pretermits the aids of Nature by remaining inert and blindfolded to his absolute dependence upon Nature's munificence. Again, the cottage amidst 'tuft of olives' demonstrates two conflicting facts, i.e. man's yearning for peace and solace amidst the solitude of Nature away from the hassles and hazards of urbanism on one hand and on the other, a man-made cell, the opaque walls of which restrict one's communication with abounding Nature.

The building of cottage embodies consumerist and opportunist civilization's encroachment of Nature's haven, thereby disturbing its quietude and spoiling its topography; the graffiti on trees attest man's chauvinistic pedantry unwarrantedly defacing Nature's beauty. Hence, they exemplify eco-offensiveness. Associating outskirts of the forest with the 'border upon a petticoat' marks commoditization of Nature in terms of women's garments. Man's impuissance and flaws have been unjustly paralleled with the natural traits of the non-humans, e.g. sincerity of one's love is derogatorily suspected as a worm eaten nut'. Hunting expeditions in the Forest of Arden in the play attest how non-human life forms get interrupted and sometimes decimated when they encounter human intervention. Conversation between Silvius and Phoebe appear to be ignorantly justifying hangman's obligation in performing a brutal task of executing man, a manifestation of barbaric man-dictated law, which is actually an eco-fatal crime. Hunting for satisfying biological hunger is ecologically agreeable, but employing deadly weapons for easy poaching of the animals triggers obliteration and extinction of the species, thereby posing threat to wild-life, hence flagitiously ecocidal. The production of the intoxicant alcohol also exemplifies forced distortion and decomposition of Nature's bounty. Thus man's ingratitude gets illustrated through his eco-heinous activities as a grave impact of seven virulent sins that perpetually plague him because of his turning away from eco-rationality. Duke's remarks, 'Sweet are the uses of adversity', 'Here feel we not the penalty of Adam' and Amien's lyrics 'Here shall he see no enemy but winter and rough weather' express positive perspectives of human beings about the

pristine environment distant from the periphery of the polluted societal pandemonium. They feel blessed that they have been able to cross the threshold of a realm which conceals its vacuous contradictions, noxious hypocrisy, malign opportunism, dire rigidities and unwarranted arrogance surrounding temporal trivialities in a sumptuous camouflage.

IV

As You Like It presents how man often becomes the cause of deterioration, demolition and dilapidation of his immediate environment due to his over-exploitative, autocratic approach as a dire consequence of declining organic sensibility in him. In the name of progress man desires and aims to achieve abnormally much beyond merely satisfying basic necessities, thus jeopardizing its own existence in reality. A series of events ecologically affirm that all artificial enclosures mostly serve as a schizophrenic, barren and cold shroud for human beings who later struggle to escape in want of respite from such a morbid domain, thereby dismantling the prejudice of obtaining solace and shelter in man-made places. Forest of Arden in the play stands for open realms of Nature where everyone gets relief and life celebrates itself, thereby indicating fragility of human inventions in front of the bio-centric. Also human flaws like ego, inhibitions, intrigue, flattery, revenge, conceit etc. are dysfunctional and futile in wilderness. The play conveys that success, profits and conquest aided by synthetic power makes man narcissistic and impudent to such an extent that he bluntly rejects religion as a trivial affair and superstition. So, as an aftermath of his disjunction from eco-oriented realism, he becomes dehumanised, chaotic and disintegrated from within. A couple of prehensile, self-indulgent agents in the play illustrate man's grim propensity to conquer and control everything around for exhibiting power, though by geological time scales and in front of cosmic enormousness, he is a mere infant and infinitesimal. It eco-critically witnesses man's suppression and negation of innate freedom in his pursuit of formal mannerisms with an objective rational approach. Certain events symbolically concretise that all life on earth possesses an intrinsic significance and humans have no authority to blemish, pollute, exploit and reduce the serene, bio-diverse sanctuary by misusing technology and scientific devices for perpetuating their corporeality. The play equally suggests that each human heart apart from the external flora and fauna symbolizes an organic resource, which when gets overexploited, remorselessly annihilated, lethally poisoned and polluted by mechanised

intelligence of human ambitions, the ultimate aftermath is nothing but decay, damnation and ruin of the humans themselves. That an eco-integral metamorphosis is possible only in Nature's lap away from onerous man-made territories and that ecological sapience does exist but only waits to be rescued from under the debris of cataclysmic philosophies have been illustrated in the play. Episodes in the play eco-righteously establish that philanthropic values should be inculcated for rendering life meaningful, authoritarian culture should be demolished with a vision and mission of hearing distinctly the agony of naïve, underprivileged and subjugated world and the universe should be comprehended not through supremacy and subversion but by providing freedom and space to all entities alike. The play justifies the need to assert eco-stability, which can be accomplished through promoting a non-corrupt, unbiased, rational temperament, innate conflict resolution practices, initiatives enhancing equality, flair for mutual respect, preservation and peaceful co-existence, adaptability, endurance, non-violence, rehabilitation, compassion and fore-sightedness. Thus, by appreciating heterogeneity over homogenisation, and opting compatibility and adaptability over rigidity as the only avenues to restore balance and harmony in man-Nature relationship required indispensably for redemption of mankind, *As You Like It* highlights itself as an eco-phenomenal masterpiece.

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ISSN 0975-5365

Conifers Call

Shimla Journal of Poetry and Criticism

(An International Peer Reviewed Biannual Journal)



Autumn 2019 (Vol.11 No.2) & Spring 2020 (Vol.12 No.1)