

Women And Nature in Kalidasa's 'Abhijnana Shakuntalam.'

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Abstract

The purpose of the research that has been carried out is to try, from the perspective of ecofeminism, to investigate the predicament of women in Kalidasa's *Abhijnana Shakuntalam*. This work was composed between the third and fourth centuries AD and reflects an old monarchical Indian social context. The research that has been carried out has been done to accomplish this goal. The study of this masterwork has shed light on the philosophical and phenomenal similarity between the traits, temperament, duties, and obligations of woman and nature. It has similarly foreseen how the worldwide poverty, exploitation, marginalisation, abrogation, depletion, commoditization, or subjection of women continues to link to those of Nature. Specifically, it has examined the ways in which poverty, exploitation, marginalisation, abrogation, and depletion all stem from the same root. These images not only symbolise a covert revolt against person's hierarchical injustice as well as monopoly over woman as well as nature, but also stress the importance of developing a relationship with the woman-Nature entity that's also harmonious, inter-coordinative, collaborative, deferential, consistent, as well as unbiased in order to eradicate these problems and advance human progress. These qualities are all essential for the advancement of humankind.

Introduction

The cultural inheritance of the West and the East are diametrically opposed to one another, but the fundamental perspectives remain the same when it comes to eco-sexism is the view that women's restricted independence and scope of action are due primarily to their biological make-up, their reproductive roles, and their tiny, weak bodies. This view permeates patriarchal communities across the two continents. By stating that women are always inferior, it was first males who helped spread and legitimize such attitudes, both mentally and in other respects. Disloyalty, fraudulence, jealousy, a lack of skill, and holiness were all seen as inherent feminine defects in eastern civilization, just as they were in western civilization, which was the oriental civilization's counterpart. (According to the Encyclopedia Britannica)¹ According to Aristotle, women are beings who are incomplete, lack bravery, are weak, and make rash decisions. In his opinion, the mark of a good woman is one who is submissive to the authority of a man. Purity, patience, self-denial, kindness, generosity, selflessness, wisdom, temperance, sensitivity, civility, flexibility, modesty, elegance, and passivity are the hallmarks of the stereotypically feminine persona. Women's autonomy beyond the home, family, and spouse was not recognized by ancient philosophies.

Sanskrit epic writing contains nearly huge quantities of depictions of legends and

champions who have a role in the overarching storyline of the sagas, or in the tales that organize independent episodes and subplots (Milewska, 2005)². Kalidasa's time and that of his contemporaries, when Rome was reeling from brutal onslaught, the Christian era was likely in its fifth century. At every given time, he has been revered by Hindus as the greatest Sanskrit poet and writer. There are seven pieces of Kalidasa that have survived: three dramas, two novellas, an elegiac sonnet, and an instructional sonnet. *Abhijnanashakuntalam* is the most renowned and revered literary masterpiece written in Sanskrit.

Legends, sonnets, and dramatizations all feature prominently in Sanskrit literature, introducing various depictions of women. Kalidasa wrote his works to appeal to certain audiences and readers, which draws attention to the portrayal's lack of objectivity. Perhaps it is an inevitable result of the subject matter that Kalidasa chose to write about that Female protagonists fare better than male ones in appealing to today's readers. Overall, the women in the play exemplified "the brilliant rule." It included characteristics such as compassion and openness, tenacity and tolerance of spirit, love, devotion, constancy, and a desire for happiness. For the most part, all lady characters show up at the eligible age as spouses or friends and family. Regardless, most of Kalidasa's female protagonists share a considerate and lenient attitude, a commitment to staying the course, and a yearning for a happy love. Although ladies in the contemporary time didn't assume a significant part and were not regarded in the family and in the public eye, they likewise had a profound help and establishment for legend's solidarity precisely and local area strength overall. The ladies had the option to rouse activity and legend's goals with their own respectability and profound human warmth. The lady with awesome and faultless magnificence isn't just gorgeous by all accounts yet, in addition delightful inside with temperate characters. In *Abhijnanasakuntalam* likewise, we notice the dynamic and free job of a woman. The character of Sakuntala is displayed as a basic recluse young lady who endeavored hard to accomplish her objective. The ancient Indian epic, the *Mahabharata*, tells the story of a monarch named Dushyanta and a beautiful woman named Shakuntala. This drama is structured into seven acts, each of which focuses on a different aspect of their love story.

In the anthropocentric culture, women are either worshipped as deities or condemned as witches and wenches. However, they will never be able to reveal the extent of her terror and anguish since her voice will be permanently stifled. They're a feature that evolved alongside men's minds, ribcages, and dexterity. (Gilbert & Gubar, p.12)³ This is why they must be conquered. Being brave, entrepreneurial, and outspoken in women is discouraged in male-authored literature because these traits have been demonised as flaws that detract from and alter the male-defined serious feminine image. This is because male-texts have portrayed these qualities as if they were demonic blemishes.

The patriarchal contrivances allege that the conventional images of the enchanting mythological female characters like Sphinx, Medusa, Circe, Kali, Delilah, and Salome are deceitful captivators who artfully reduce and steal male creative energy.

Within a culture that is controlled by ecologically unfriendly patriarchs and their arbitrary views, women have been subjected to persistent victimization, criticism, and humiliation in a variety of forms. This has happened in a variety of settings.

Both eastern and western cultures had the belief that a woman's place was in the home of her husband or family. Motherhood, wifehood, daughterhood, and sisterhood are all flags under which a woman must work, and carrying those flags requires quiet suffering, unwavering goodwill toward the family, and a willingness to sacrifice one's own happiness and well-being

for the sake of others, regardless of the circumstances. The admired woman plays the role of the selfless nurturer, who should graciously let the legendary hierarchy and philosophy handed down from the father to overshadow and diminish her own contribution. It's inevitable that her ideal world would clash with patriarchal expectations and ideas about what it means to be a woman in every way. Her attitude of defiance, or her willingness to take direct action, against the patriarchal monopoly, causes a clash that not only results in her experiencing great hardship, but also places her in the company of other toxic, irrational, and abnormal individuals.

Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism⁴ marks the start of a new awareness that seeks to reimagine the role of women in relation to the natural world. This incredible finding was produced for the greater good of all people.

Ecofeminism⁵ is a broad term for gender-inclusive environmental movements and ideologies. It was originally used by French novelist Françoise d'Eaubonne in her book "Le Féminisme ou la Mort." She is credited with creating the word. According to ecofeminism, women and the environment have a similar history of subjugation at the hands of a patriarchal Western society, which creates a bond between the two. Because ecofeminism connects women's subjugation with environmental degradation, we may make this connection. Vandana Shiva says that women's everyday experiences with nature form the basis for their distinctive relationship to the environment, but that this has been overlooked. When discussing the role of women in economics based on subsistence, she argues that create "wealth in partnership with nature, have been experts in their own right of holistic and ecological knowledge of nature's processes." have long had a unique and comprehensive understanding of the natural world. In any case, she argues that

The capitalist reductionist worldview disregards these other ways of knowing since they focus on the common good and basic necessities of survival.

This is because the paradigm fails to account for the significance of women's lived experiences, labour, or expertise in creating economic value and the interconnectedness of nature. (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecofeminism>) By analysing the limitations of based on culture presuppositions regarding women as well as Nature/nonhuman things, ecofeminism does more than just provide an analytical framework for studying these topics in literature; it also proposes ways in which humans can transcend their cultural identities and create a more harmonious global community. To do this, we need to look at how cultural assumptions about women or Nature/nonhuman beings might be limiting. Ecofeminism is more than just a theory about how to examine Nature and women. Not only does Karen Warren stress the significance of women's relationships to the uninhabited natural environment, but she also stresses the importance of being cognizant of a simultaneous dominance that women & Nature share. The term "ecofeminism" refers to a powerful movement that chronicles intense indignation and disgust against the senseless and callous devastation of nature and women.

Ecofeminism in Abhijananshakuntalam

The renowned Indian poet Kalidasa has painted a picture of an era and culture in which kingship and polygamy were common practices. However, the essential traits and shortcomings around which he has constructed the graph of womanhood are constantly intersecting with the female pictures painted by other writers, even though Kalidasa creates exquisite characters for

each of the maidens that are both distinct and varied.

काव्येषु नाटकं रम्यं तत्र रम्या शकुन्तला। तत्रापि च चतुर्थोऽंकोत्तत्र श्लोक चतुष्टयम् ॥

Kalidasa's masterworks such as *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* and *Kumar Sambhavam* vividly depict the enduring influence of stereotypical and offensive ideas about women. His writings make it clear that he holds traditional views that discount the value of women's autonomy and that he has a low tolerance for women who do not strictly adhere to the concept of chastity. His focus on the qualities of Indian women as the glory of the old race is powerfully expressed in the passage's use of the phrase "glory of the ancient race." In addition to be a sympathetic designer, he portrays the awful and worsening situation that the Indian lady finds herself in. Kalidasa have produced compelling representations of the position and situation of women, which are also the centerpieces of their play, while being constrained to their individual eras and the social environments in which they were created. Imaginative inventions, which are founded on the ecocide activities that are exacerbating the situation women find themselves in, continue to be the same everywhere as of now. An ecofeminist perspective is utilized throughout this study to evaluate the roles that women play in Kalidasa's *Abhijnana Shakuntalam*.

The personification of the mythical *Shakuntala* found in Kalidasa's *Abhijnana Shakuntalam*, often known as "the loveliest of poetic creations." She was born through Sage Vishwamitra's union with the heavenly court dancer Menka, making her biological offspring. During her formative years, she spent her time in the hermitage of Sage Kanva and Gautami, who were responsible for her upbringing and care. It has been likened to the artificial and courtly beauty that Kalidasa has shown, and it has been detailed in its most enticing form. The comparison comes from the fact that it has been described. The poet Kalidasa has described the pure virgin attractiveness of the woman. In addition, she has the characteristics that are often associated with the archetype of an Indian woman. These characteristics include 'shobha' (beauty), 'kanti' (charm), 'madhurya' (delicacy), 'dipti' (radiance), 'dhairya' (patience), and 'audarya' (dignity). The inventiveness and attractiveness that she has are analogous to those that are possessed by Mother Nature. Sage Kanva, who was *Shakuntala*'s foster father, explained that in accordance with her rituals, she would not have food until all the plants and creepers in the hermitage had been irrigated. She has a delicate care for the flowers, thus despite her love of floral arrangements, she would never pick even a single bloom from among them. Instead, she would hold a party to honor the first efflorescence among them. Therefore, *Shakuntala* is a representation of women, who, in addition to their traditional role as guardians of seed and biodiversity, hold the reverent belief that the essence of seed, followed by the entirety of flora, is the continuation of life. Her gentle care for the tamed deer and cattle, in addition to the plants, demonstrates that the contribution of women's labor and expertise to dairy farming and agriculture is essential to the preservation of ecological balance, sustainability, and production. *Shakuntala* is compared to other fawns in the forest by *Dushyanta*, who is the representation of the patriarchal, capitalistic, and authoritarian realm of the civilization. *Dushyanta* says that *Shakuntala* has grown as much as any other fawn in the forest. The shy and fidgety fawn is a perfect representation of the tranquilly, innocence, and allure of the hermitage that is nestled among the tranquil regions of the forest. The character *Shakuntala* serves as a metaphorical stand-in for the entire drama. *Dushyanta* likens her flawless beauty to Humanity's greatest bewitching freshness as well as sanctity, which, whenever noticed by materialistic section of society, is guaranteed to become a victim of brutal consumption, such as a flower whose fragrance hasn't yet been savoured, a delicate shoot

whose pliability hasn't yet been shattered by nails, an unpolished diamond, as well as fresh honey whose syrup hasn't yet been tasted. Dushyanta's idealisation of Shakuntala's attractiveness as a result of his desire to colonise and devour her in full is masked by his eulogization of her faultless beauty. The forest or hermitages under his rule are, on only one hand, his royal responsibility. While the forest is a microcosm of a natural world, the king's hunting trip disrupts its order. Morally speaking, the King's actions are on par with an invasion on Shakuntala's body and spirit. He is utilising both while seeming to be environmentally conscious. Using his charisma and stoic expression, Dushyanta manages to have Shakuntala arrested. When a hunter lures defenceless animals and birds into his traps, they end themselves in the same position as the prey. Dushyanta secretly wed her through the unpopular Gandharva marriage procedures because he agrees to treat her as his property and exploit her as his personal property, in accordance with a contractual policy devised by men, are examples of this. In this regard, her future is analogous to a portion of the world that has been walled off and is under the authority of man. The monarch gave her a signet ring that had the words "Abhijnana Shakuntalam" engraved on it. This ring serves as an example of a stamp that is put on the property to identify the owner of the land. Her position is degraded to that of an object, much like nature's, which is consistent with this theme. Dushyanta's sexual encounters with Shakuntala are emblematic not only of his complete colonisation and dominion over her, but also of a process in which he ploughs her to harvest sexual pleasure and potential heirs to the throne or bureaucratic minions. In other words, the sexual intercourse is a symbol of the complete colonization and dominance that Dushyanta has over Her condition is analogous to that of nature, which regularly undergoes the destructive process of being transformed into an industrial product or an agricultural output. Her condition is comparable to that of nature.

Her cheeks are extremely thin, her breasts are sagging, her waist is narrower, her shoulders sag severely, and her skin is sickly white. Her breasts have also lost their firmness. Her waist is narrower. All these changes are the cumulative effects of the pregnancy she is carrying. (Tewari, p. 238)⁶ Her predicament is comparable to that of nature, which, when stripped of its natural beauty and its capacity to provide vital nutrients, loses both qualities. Her condition is like what happens when nature is overharvested. She buries in her own bosom the suffocating personal woes and upheaval that she is experiencing together with hopes and aspirations for the future in the same way that the earth's core holds mines of riches and volcanic lava combined. In this way, she is like how the earth's core holds combined mines of riches and volcanic lava. The only error that she made was that she did not adhere to her duty of hospitality and deference towards her visitor Maharshi Durvasa. Because of this, Maharshi Durvasa misunderstands the situation and becomes angry, hurling obscenities at her. In light of the mounting pressure brought on by these crucial conditions, this error was committed absentmindedly. The sage is a symbol of destructive masculine chauvinism and the things that are associated with men that are bad. His curse is a representation of a weapon that eradicates Shakuntala's existence by prohibiting the monarch from remembering anything at all about her. Because Shakuntala abandoned her obligation to protect the customary link that women have had with the natural world, her eventual suffering may be a kind of retribution that is morally acceptable. This may be the case if one considers the fact that she acted irresponsibly. Dushyanta's unrelenting refusal to acknowledge her, his severe abrogation & apathy toward her appeal, his malicious insinuations regarding them inability to present the token of evidence, her signet ring, and his ruthless rejection have cast her into the margins as an abandoned item. Dushyanta's rejection of her and his hints that she won't be able to deliver the signet ring serve as evidence. She falls victim to his carelessness, suspicion, and apathy, and thus becomes a victim. Again, her situation is analogous to that of a piece of land that is purposefully abandoned by men with a bias toward commerce after those men have depleted the land to the point where it is on the verge of being uninhabitable and have concluded that it is an undesirable

outsider in their declared territory. The disgrace that results from the king's inappropriate behavior casts a shadow not just over the pregnant woman but also over her unborn child. The atmosphere inside of Shakuntala's womb fosters bravery and radiance in her unborn child, Sarvadamana, who would later be known as Bharat. It is impossible to deny the reality that a mother's mental and physical health have a significant impact on the well-being of their child. They believe that the fact that she has feelings of obligation and duty toward her unborn child indicates that she is remarkably strengthened, more matured, stable, courageous, flexible, and tolerant despite having endured a terrible experience of societal injustice along with several ailments. This is because the fact that she feels a sense of obligation and duty toward her unborn child suggests that she has a feeling of obligation and duty toward her unborn child. The sacred seclusion of Sage Maricha's hermitage, in which she seeks sanctuary during the full phases of her pregnancy, also plays an essential role in protecting her womb from being subjected to any additional torments or traumas. Sage Maricha seeks sanctuary in the hermitage during these stages of her pregnancy. She is at her most susceptible to this kind of injury when she is in these situations. A fundamental tenet of ecofeminism is the notion that there is a parallel connection between Mother Nature and the other creatures in the world. "Her fortitude and acceptance of all injustice as her misfortune without any protest against her husband Dushyanta returns her to the traditional characteristics of a woman, which are self-annihilation and surrender to the male-built whirlpool of tradition and conservatism"⁷ (Khanal, Shyama, 2022). Dushyanta, her husband, restores her to the conventional roles of a woman by her tenacity and her willingness to take any disaster she experiences as her own. Her resoluteness, as well as her willingness to take any wrong as her own tragedy and to endure it without raising a voice of complaint against her husband Dushyanta. Therefore, motherhood, which is shown as a glorious situation of a woman, represents the related self-effacing stance of a woman as an intrinsically productive and sustaining worker/laborer. Motherhood is presented as a beautiful condition of a woman. What is seen as grandeur is, in truth, a barrier to their freedom and must be conquered for them to be free. "Both Shakuntala's eagerness to take her father's consent as part of her moral duty and her foster mother Gautami's remorse at Shakuntala's independent decision pertaining to a serious institution like marriage imply that it is the father who has the right to exercise his authority upon his unmarried daughter and decide her future. Shakuntala is eager to take her father's consent as part of her moral duty. Her foster mother Gautami is remorseful as a part of her ethical obligation, Shakuntala is very excited to get approval from her father"⁸ (Biswas, Sumana, 2016). "The fact that Sage Kanva was the one to initiate sending Shakuntala to her husband's place when there was no escort from the palace to bestow the honour to which she was entitled shows that Shakuntala's position is that of property, the custody of which is automatically transferred from her biological family to her husband's family after the couple gets married. Sage Kanva sent Shakuntala to her husband's residence when it became clear that no escort from the palace would come to bestow the honour to which she was due"⁹ (Dev, Amiya Kumar, 1967). Shakuntala is used in a manner consistent with that of a commodity. The fact that Dushyanta was able to recall all that had happened before with Shakuntala when he caught sight of the missing ring has been explained away because of the curse. However, the fact that it is possible to regard a dead item (ring) as a dependable and useful signifier to invalidate the true form of woman (Shakuntala) is an open and honest revelation of the position of woman in patriarchal societies. The submissive pleads that Gautami made to Dushyanta in front of Shakuntala's father, Dushyanta, to accept her are reflective of the natural flair that Gautami possesses for avoiding and resolving confrontations to protect Shakuntala's existence. Even Anusuya and Priyamvada had pleaded with Durvasa to have pity on Shakuntala since they shared the same concern for conserving resources. They are pleading with him to lift the curse because they do not want anything to happen to their good buddy that would be unbearably difficult for them to go through as well as anything that would destroy their friend's life. When Shakuntala was about to leave after being reunited with

Dushyanta, Sage Kashyap gave her some advise that was very much in line with the beliefs of an ideal "*Grihini*" (wifehood). Shakuntala is a lady whose participation and efforts in general are barred from receiving compensation and appreciation in a manner comparable to that of Nature. Kalidasa has subtly called attention to the outstanding contribution as well as the onerous sacrifices that she has made as a woman throughout her life. He has placed his attention on her mental fortitude and might, which gives her the ability to triumph over any obstacles; but, he has neglected to pay attention to one essential factor that is associated with the revival of her awareness. He has been focusing his attention on the force and strength of her mind. All the actions that are geared toward restoring her really wind up leading to more servitude and escalating poverty for her, rather than actual emancipation for her. Nature too faces comparable catastrophes. Therefore, Shakuntala and the eco-domain are inextricably linked to one another throughout all phases, both symbolically and literally.

Discussion

As a result, through our study of Kalidasa's *Abhijnana Shakuntalam*, "we have come to understand that these texts, despite having very different sociohistorical settings, reflect similar perceptions of the set of mannerisms, obligations, and duties that women must adhere to as well as the various ways in which their role, destiny, status, and identity are connected to Nature" (Chafe, et. al., 1978)¹⁰. We can attest to this since we have experienced it. Shakuntala, who descended from an ancient, monarchical Indian civilization, are inexorably linked to one another because to their shared suffering at the hands of patriarchal capitalism's egotistical practices. By enveloping Shakuntala's virginal and alluring beauty in the eco-antagonistic and pretentious art of embellishment that man produces, Dushyanta's idealization of Shakuntala hides their depletion. In Kalidasa's *Abhijnana Shakuntalam*, Shakuntala is presented as a combination of stereotypically feminine characteristics and feelings that have been linked to natural resources so that they might be exploited and stolen carelessly. The image of Shakuntala is a bundle. These women have been reduced from living entities into simple commodities because of anarchical gender-based hierarchies and bureaucracies that are on a mission to display their dominance. This has occurred in an eco-antipathetic manner and has degraded the women. They have been subjected to unnecessary restraints, and as a result, their multifaceted nature, which is an essential component of their feminine rectitude, has been reduced to serving as one of the constraints and barriers they face on the path to liberalization. The works of art have also enlightened us to the way the roles of these women are comparable to those of Nature, namely in the capacity of maintenance workers. Their contribution has never been given the consideration it deserves since their work is indistinguishable from the natural processes that occur on a continuous basis and are thus taken for granted. Therefore, specifically Shakuntala's predicament might be a symbolic equivalent or correspondence to degraded natural landscapes. Their rehabilitation, such as "Shakuntala's reunion with Dushyanta, conceals man's egocentric objectives and his destructive tendencies of reducing women to basic objects that need to be delivered/rescued and directed by men" (Culp, Amanda, 2018)¹¹. One example of this is how Shakuntala was reunited with Dushyanta. One illustration of this is how Shakuntala and Dushyanta were able to reconcile their relationship. This kind of payment is suggestive of an ecological parallelism between Shakuntala and nature, the latter of which is seen as a resource that may be used for the sake of making a physical profit in the service of promoting civilization and sustaining cultural traditions. Their poverty and distress are not the result of their inadequate participation in the process of development; rather, it is the result of biased discrimination that has been practiced against them. Even though they have gone through all the suffering, they have been denied the recognition and the pleasure. As a gift from the natural environment in which she has been raised, Nature has bestowed upon Shakuntala the provisions and facilities necessary for her survival. However, Shakuntala suffers desecration at the hands

of Dushyanta, just like the naive non-human entities, and Viola is subjected to exploitation in her role as an employee. Therefore, relying just on one's own self-sufficiency will not be enough to free either women or nature. Shakuntala has received instruction and guidance from Nature throughout her life. The type of education they are receiving does not help in any way with their empowerment. In spite of the fact that Kalidasa's writings have been heavily censored in accordance with common eco-averse patriarchal fancies about women, we still are able to unearth evidence of his backing of eco-feminist ideals that appropriately seek to secure female sovereignty. In spite of widespread eco-averse patriarchal fancies about women, Kalidasa's work have been influential. This enlightened understanding may shed light on women's roles, identities, and social standing in a way that benefits nature. This realisation is crucial for the emancipation of women, but Shakuntala does not have it. Although Kalidasa's *Abhijnana Shakuntalam* was undersupplied. We can see that he has some degree of compassion for women because of the detailed account he gives of Shakuntala's merits and her predicament. We also see in both playwrights a willingness to fight against injustices that are committed against women and the natural world as a single entity. This is something that we share with both. This is an attempt by the author to imply that women need to be revered on the same level as sacred grooves. The subjugation of women is directly tied to a man's ability to dominate in the natural world. It is necessary to reestablish women's participation in communication in a manner that is non-exploitative, reciprocal, and reintegrated while maintaining their connection to nature. It proposes a decision to stop harming them for egotistical profit and instead strive toward their wellbeing, upliftment, and conservation.

Conclusion

In this drama, references to the vitality and expansiveness of nature have been used several times to convey the allure of women. It has been said that a woman's garments are referred to as the 'weeds of women,' and that the eventual waning of a woman's temporary youth and beauty is compared to the wilting of a rose blossom as a result of the effects of time and the law of nature, which states that everything that is mortal must eventually wither and die in order to preserve the delicate balance that exists within the ecosystem. In addition, "a number of traits of animals and birds have been anthropocentrically paralleled with human-specific inconsistencies and frailties. For example, Malvolio's vanity and arbitrariness are associated with the biological features and functions of naïve non-human animals, such as the "woodcock near the gin" (2.5.77), the "turkey-cock" with "advanced plumes" the "ass" and the "dog." The use of analogies like these demonstrates how man's biased paralleling of the biocentric and zoo centric world with the unattractive images of the materialistic civilization usually leads to errors in both worlds. Consequently, all human frailties and constraints have been unfairly coupled with portrayals of Nature and women in equal measure. Because of this, in the viewpoint of a sexist society that is controlled by males, a woman and nature are placed in the same position in terms of their relative degrees of susceptibility. The sheer fear of losing fragile authority and male chauvinism make an already authoritarian mentality more frightening when evaluated from an ecocritical viewpoint. This has the effect of eliminating and entombing the organic and spiritual knowledge of women and Nature alike beneath the debris of somatic philosophy. Eco critically, this is an example of how male chauvinism contributes to ecocritical thinking.

The ecofeminist reading of this play highlights the ways in which a woman, as a personification of virtues, is symbolically like fruitful Nature in that both are susceptible to

allecocidepractices carried out by man in the name of progress and culture. From a green perspective, they are a protest the hostile and brutal colonization of women. This case exemplifies how women and the natural world are inextricably intertwined as sources of productivity. The ecofeminist analysis of the play presented here shows how a woman's inherent kindness, fertility, and regenerative capacity become the most abhorrent of all the barriers standing in the way of women's liberation. Feminine traits like adaptability and flexibility have been devalued and misrepresented as weaknesses on the side of weak women. The feminine character inherently features adaptability and pliability. This ecocritical examination also shows how many times the opportunistic autocrats of human civilization have tried to shackle and sterilize the rebellious and stubborn demeanor of woman and the hostile eco/biosphere. The prevalent practice of sterilizing women's genitalia is highlighted by this ecocritical examination. Ecologically, "the play is a manifesto against the totalitarian exploitation, marginalization, derogation, and oppression of women; the callous degradation of women and Nature/earth from their natural status as living entities to that of commercial goods to be possessed and consumed despite their sacred significance and generous service to society; the ascending manipulations, hypocrisy, and injustice practiced by those at the top of society" (Ebert, Teresa L. Ludic, 1996)¹². As a result, this drama uses ecocriticism to call for the end of anthropocentric oppression and gender inequality. Furthermore, a proposal is made for an ecorational appraisal of women's contributive efforts, which are just as important as men's, and a defense against the negation of this fact is offered concurrently.

¹ Thomas Spencer Baynes. "Encyclopedia Britannica." (Forgotten Books, 2018). Vol. XXIII, p. 702.

² I. Milewska, 'Love and ascetics in the Mahābhārata as compared to Umā and Śiva story from the Kumārasambhava.' Cracow Indological Studies, (2005).

³ Sandra. M. Gilbert & Susan. Gubar, "The Mad Woman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth – Century Literary Imagination." New Haven: Yale UP, (1979).

⁴ Maria. Mies & Vandana. Shiva, Ecofeminism, (2nd. impression.). (Halifax, Nova Scotia' Fernwood Publications 1994).

⁵ "Ecofeminism". Accessed on 14 Jan. 2022, <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ecofeminism>.

⁶ Manju. Tewari, "A Comparative Study of the Heroines in the Dramas of Kalidasa and the Romantic Comedies of Shakespeare". Miss. Rani Durgavati Vishwavidyalaya, Jabalpur, India, (1993).

⁷ Shyama. Khanal, "Women and Nature in Abhijnanashakuntalam: An Eco-feminist Study." *Haimaprabha* (2022): pp.229-236.

⁸ Sumana. Biswas, "Female Protagonists in Shakespeare's Twelfth Night and Kalidasa's Abhijnana Shakuntalam: An Ecofeminist Reading." (*An International Refereed e-Journal of Literary Explorations*, 2016).

⁹ Amiya Kumar Deb, 'Shakuntala', 'Rama's Later History', 'Cymbeline', 'And 'the Winter's Tale': A Comparative Study in Tragicomic Structure. (Indian University, 1967).

¹⁰ William H. Chafe. "Women and equality: Changing patterns in American culture." Vol. 531. (Oxford University Press on Demand, 1978).

¹¹ Amanda Culp, "Shakuntala's Storytellers: Translation and Performance in the Age of World Literature (1789–1912)." (*Theatre Journal* 70), no. 2, (2018), pp. 133-152.

¹² Teresa L. Ebert, Ludic, 'Feminism and after: Postmodernism, desire, and labor in late capitalism'. (University of Michigan Press), (1996).