

Woman-Nature Interface: An Ecofeminist Study by Dipak Giri

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Bibliographic Information:

Name of the Book: Woman-Nature Interface: An Ecofeminist Study

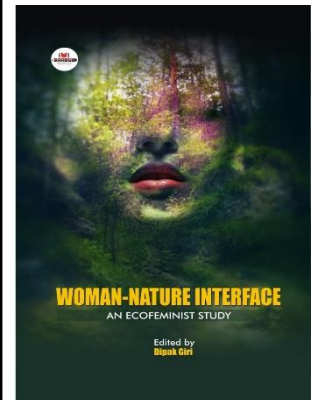
Author: Dipak Giri

Publisher: AABS Publishing House

Language: English

ISBN: 978-93-88963-60-2

Price: INR 899 | \$ 20



The book *Woman-Nature Interface: An Ecofeminist Study* under review is a scholarly compilation offering a nuanced and insightful exploration of the intricate connection between woman and the natural world through the ecofeminist lens. The cover page of the book features a visually engaging design reflecting the main theme of ecofeminism and the underlying connection between women and nature. The content of the book provides comprehensive examination tracing the roots of ecofeminism and highlighting its key proponents. Meticulously structured, this collection of articles by various scholars illustrates how women's issues and environmental concerns intersect and how these intersections are addressed within the framework of ecofeminism. As a reviewer I perceive, the book presents a multifaceted examination of how the exploitation of nature and the subjugation of women are deeply intertwined. The volume comprising nineteen chapters provides a critical analysis of how patriarchal structures and environmental degradation are intertwined and how it underscores the importance of addressing these issues in tandem. The contributors explore how cultural narratives shape perceptions of both women and the environment and how these narratives can be reimagined to promote equality and sustainability.

At the outset, the book introduces the core tenet of ecofeminism - its insistence that ecological and gender issues cannot be disentangled. The argument is compelling, emphasizing that the physical environment is integral to understanding the evolution of both individual and society. The introductory chapter of the book critiques the western ecofeminist view that nature and women are inherently linked through a feminine principle. In modern times, nature has become an obstacle to man on his way to establish himself as superior so becomes an object to be dominated and to control like the women who are also thought as inferior. The book as a whole delves into the concept that both nature and women are seen as giving and

sacrificing entities since time immemorial. It also talks of material bond between nature and women in countries like India and finds this connection as complex and dynamic rather than simple. The book investigates the women and nature connect in the third world countries, reflecting how nature and women both suffer under the patriarchal social system. It is also an analysis of how the ecofeminists opine that the link between women and nature can be sustained on the basis of ideology, biology, ontology and a history of oppression. There are insightful arguments, that such portrayals reflect deep-seated cultural constructs and proposes ways to liberate both women and nature from these entrenched ideologies.

Though all the chapters of the book are important to understand women-nature parallelism, some of the chapters which I think, should be mentioned here. Mahendran U's chapter "A Multidimensional Projection of Land: A Reading of *Gone with the Wind* in the Light of War" underscores the significance of land and its connection to human identity, while also addressing the destructive impact of warfare on the environment. This discussion provides a poignant reminder of the broader ramifications of environmental degradation giving it a garb of global issue. The chapter written by Jyoti Biswas explores the harmony between women and nature and contrasts it with the disruptive impact of patriarchal systems. The narrative of Mahua and her relationship with nature is particularly striking, serving as a poignant illustration of the nurturing potential of this relationship, which is starkly contrasted with the destructive force of patriarchal dominance exemplified by Homra. The chapter written by Parimal Kumar paints a grim picture of a desolate world marred by environmental imbalance and patriarchal control. It reveals how such imbalances exacerbate the suffering of women, restricting their opportunities and leading to perpetual hardship. Next Shantanu Siuli's chapter "A Re-conceiving and Re-visioning of both the Feminism and the Environmental Ethics as the Power and Promise of Ecofeminism: A Detailed Study" emphasizes the ecofeminist argument that various forms of violence against women are intrinsically linked to the disregard for the environment. It reinforces the central thought of the book, highlighting the pervasive contempt that underpins both environmental and gender injustices. On the same thread, the article on Anita Desai's *Fire on the Mountain* written by Manas Barik continues this exploration, focusing on how the earth is symbolically represented as a female entity in third-world contexts. It critiques the exploitation of this symbolic 'Mother Earth' within patriarchal capitalist societies, drawing parallels to the exploitation of women.

The book as a whole delves into the clandestine connections between ecofeminists and nature, exploring their resistance against patriarchal and moralistic constraints. It examines how religious and cultural narratives perpetuate these constraints, and how ecofeminists strive to overcome them. The book also talks about third world countries where Earth is represented as a female Mother earth and Virgin land. Both suffer exploitation and violence at the hand of patriarchal capitalist society. Apart from this, the book also depicts that the nexus between nature and woman has been the focus of ancient Indian literature. The discussion on implication of feminization of agriculture, financial independence of women are all thought provoking representing new challenges faced by women concerning their social status in present times.

The scholarly article by the academic and writer Dipak Giri who is also the editor of the book throws light on age old struggle of women to free them from male domination and their attempts to vitiate age old gender binary nature/ culture dichotomy. The wide range of all the topics and various perspectives enrich the reader's understanding of the complex woman-nature interface.

Strengths of the Book:

The book's strength lies in its diversity of voices and perspectives, providing a multifaceted view of ecofeminism. The tapestry of varied topics and issues cover a wide range focusing on mythology, religious, spiritual, cultural, social, economic and current global perspective making the book a compendium of information on ecofeminism. In addition to this, the interdisciplinary nature of the compilation presents holistic exploration of ecofeminism, incorporating insights from literature, cultural studies, sociology and environmental science. The book offers valuable insights for scholars, activists and the scholars interested in the intersection of these fields.

Critical Overview:

The academic nature of the book may present a challenge for the readers unfamiliar with ecofeminist jargon. The wide range of topics might leave some aspects underexplored and cannot delve deep into specific issues.

Conclusion:

Overall the book is a significant contribution to the feminist and environmental literature, offering a rich tapestry of insights into the interconnectedness of gender and environmental concerns. The breadth of the topics is commendable and thus the book stands as a significant testament to the relevance of ecofeminist discourse.

Reviewer's Details:

Dr. Monika Malhotra (M.A., B.Ed & PhD) is an Associate Professor, Higher Education J & K (UT) & Head of the Department, English, GDC Akhnoor with teaching experience of 24 years. She has completed PhD in Indo-Anglican Literature. Her area of study is Feminism, Subaltern Studies & Postcolonial Literature.