

Eco Critical Perspectives In Preeti Shenoy's *When Love Came Calling*

¹K. Thangam ²Dr. K. Suresh

¹Research Scholar, Department of English, Vels Institute of Science Technologies and Advanced Studies (VISTAS), Pallavaram, Chennai.

²Assistant Professor, Department of English, Vels Institute of Science Technologies and Advanced Studies (VISTAS), Pallavaram, Chennai.

Abstract

Preethi Shenoy is one of the most influential celebrity writers of young adult fiction. The Objective of the article is to study the Ecocritical Perspectives in "*When Love Came Calling*" (2020). Preethi Shenoy incorporates the values and characteristics of ecocriticism through the character Arush. The young adults Puja and Arush meet up in the lush green backdrop for an orientation program at Wayanad where they are attracted and feel like they can never depart. Shenoy's love for pet animals and nature is explicit through her characteristic portrayal of young Arush, a British brought up in Richmond who is fond of Iguanas and Lizards. Ecocriticism is an emerging topic in contemporary English literature hence a new dimensional approach facilitates the serene life of human beings in a place of solitude. The physical setting of Shenoy's novels magnifies the green background for physical and mental strengthening and rejuvenation of the inhabitants. This article focuses on man's connection between nature and non humans and their dependence and interconnection for life. Cheryll Glotfelty defines ecocriticism "is the study of the relationship between literature and environment". Therefore the study of Ecocritical perspectives is made on Preethi Shenoy's "*when love came calling*" (2020).

Keywords: Eco criticism, Nature, Non humans, Pollution.

Ecocriticism attempts to study the relation between man and Nature. The interdisciplinary study became popular with the publication of two groundbreaking publications, *The Ecocriticism Reader* edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, and *The Environmental Imagination* by Lawrence.

While the study analyses the correlation between human beings and the realm of nature, it does not blink at the seamy side of the topic. Hence studying the behaviour of human beings, their hospitable treatment of nature gains utmost priority. It will further bring out new dimensions in the literary study and theoretical orientations. Man's behavioural pattern is shaded by the culture of his community. So the seminal work of David Arnold and Ramachandra Guha's *Nature, Culture, Imperialism* endorses the study from the cultural point of view.

Preeti Shenoy who dwells upon human relationship, especially man-woman partnership brackets man's kinship with nature in the novel

Love Came calling (2020). Arush (21) born and brought up in Britain is fond of Iguanas (Vincent). He reveals his love for the world of nature through his pet, Iguanas (Vincent). He is an art student in a college at Norwich. In the opening chapter he is excited as he had been selected for an International Programme for volunteer work in India for three months. His roommates Tom and Jenna were exchanging their views for his trip. Jenna too had applied but she didn't show any hatred for not getting this opportunity visiting a foreign country. Arush prepares and distributes a three copy list to his roommates caring for his pet Vincent in his absence regarding the feed and change over. Prior to his visit in the selection interview Arush expresses his wish to explore the land of his forefathers for discovering his roots and personally, Arush intends to find out the reason why his dad hates India.

Puja (19) brought up at Kochi, daughter of renowned parents Dr. Chaitra Krishnan (cardiac surgeon) Krishnan (a leading business man) with

no passion aimlessly posts pictures and creates stories on Instagram. Her mom forces and advises her to partake in the community development program for spending her vacation purposefully at Ashwathy Bhavan in Wayanad as part of Internship Programme. She feels ruined since her sister Divya (Miss perfect) too aggravates her agony by chatting with her fiancé Karthik (Dad's best friend's son). All the members of the family including her maid cum second mom (Shanthi Chechi) are busy with their work but she couldn't enjoy the pleasure of sitting in Ten Thousand square feet penthouse (Life is Paradise) on the 22nd floor watching the expansive sea view. The Sea is an epitome of the beauty of nature with her striking qualities of turbulence at the external level and the nature of accommodation with its expanse that:

Okay, I admit. I do feel good about some things for sure. One of them is what I am doing right now – sitting in my favourite spot on the wicker sofa at the far end of the expansive wooden-tiled balcony, overlooking the ocean with my cup of tea and onion pakodas (made by Shanti chechi just the way I like them), scrolling through Instagram. I click a picture and post it as a story. (5)

Arush mom has packed two cartons of things as a token of her love to their relative Chandru Mama in India. Arush mom runs an Indian garment shop in a section of his dad's grocery store at Derby. His sister Rhea is excited about his trip and follows the path of Arush as an artist. Arush gets ready to Heathrow Airport in India.

Before the commencement of his travel Arush arranges everything for his pet Iguana (Vincent). He reveals his love for the world of nature through his pet. He has an inborn affinity for nature and its beings. Hence he wants to guarantee the safety, welfare and security of the reptile in his absence. So he arranges its food and comfort through his friends. Yet he is preoccupied always with its well-being. Arush worried departing his pet says that:

Iguanas are not hard to take care of, but you have to be meticulous. So, I write down the instructions and make three photocopies, one each for my three housemates. I stick the one I wrote on the wall in

the yard, right above Vincent's home. It is a thirty gallon aquarium tank fitted with a reptile humidifier, basking heat lamp, plants, branches for Vincent to climb on, a fresh water bowl and everything to make his home an ultra-luxury pad. The duties have been divided between the three of them. Given that all three are fond of Vincent, I think he should be fine. But a part of me is still worried. (1)

Arush is excited to see the world class Airport at Delhi similar to Heathrow. The guide book's description that it is crowded, noisy, dirty and dusty proved incorrect. He gets his own Indian number and is happy that Indian data plans are cheap. His travels from Kochi to Wayanad are exhilarating. He admires the beauty of the sky in India which doesn't seem more beautiful than the UK then. He reaches the voluntary programme stay spot Aswathy Bhavan and the incharge Mrs. Omana greets him. The one thing he felt strange about was the remote bathroom with no washbasin and the act of brushing his teeth outdoors. After texting his parents he rests because he is exhausted.

Puja has got the packing list from Wayand due to her mom's compulsive enrolment. With no interest she doesn't follow the listed items, and she travels to Wayanad in the car driven by Anthony. Though she has taken the tablet for her travel sickness she stops then and there for vomiting. She feels tired, embarrassed and exhausted. She still remembers how she developed the same nausea in their family trip to the USA at the age of seven. At last she reaches the venue at Aswathy Bhavan and feels scared of the remote place with a simple lifestyle of having no cosy bed and bed sheets. She hits the sack in tiredness without informing her mom in anger.

Next morning she gets up and tries to reach the reception area for tea wherein she gets scared by the Chameleon which is on her way down the steps. The appearance of the Chameleons makes Arush complacent. But the teeny spirit in Puja makes her shout and shiver. Arush hears the scream to find out the terrified girl of seeing his new friend an hour before. Zelan (Chameleon). She feels irritated by his behaviour and his brief explanation for

chameleons. She identifies Arush as the lizard whisperer and is different and unique in his British accent. They come to know about each other. Puja is a BBM student and Arush an Arts college student ready to be the part of the social exchange programme. They meet the other volunteers Oshan from Srilanka (lives in US) Leah and his girlfriend, Sujit from Kerala. Sujit is familiar with Puja and he identifies her as Puja krishnan, his schoolmate. Since Puja and Sujit have a familiar conversation, Arush is reminded of his friends and he texts them.(5)

Puja thinks of Sujit, how he has gained weight then. But in school in the past he was thin and troublesome. Arush too familiarizes himself with Sujit. Thereby all the participants meet each other and get acquainted. Arush witnesses a very different locale there in Wayanad that is totally different from Norwich. Wherever he looks at he is able to enjoy the enveloping canopies of greenery. He is wonderstruck to see the jack tree and the mango trees bearing tons and tons of fruits. His poetic mind is tempted to compare the entwining creepers ascending trees with man and woman in passionate embracing posture. The bounty of nature compels Arush exclaim as:

I explore the property. Being located atop a hill, I can see winding roads stretching far below- the road we had taken last night. There is nothing but miles and miles of greenery. Tall trees form canopies. I walk around staring in fascination at tones of rope jackfruits and mangoes that I have only seen in the fresh fruit aisles at Sainsbury's. The creepers with dark green leaves climbing up the palm trees seem like lovers entwined in an embrace. (18)

The entire atmosphere of the locale where he stays bewitched him when he peers through the darkness and looks at the winking stars and an efflorescent sky. He cannot but place India about England in his imagination. Hence this analogy:

In the evening, I wander around the property again. I watch the birds, the butterflies and the countless little creatures. Being in this green space does feel like paradise. Then I get even luckier-I spot something that enthralls me. I move in closer to

observe. This is incredible!(18)

The lamp is lit and the flames dance brightly, celebrating my arrival. Millions of stars glitter and wink at me through the courtyard skies. I take in a sharp breath, mesmerised. The skies should be the same everywhere, but they are not. The night sky in the UK is not this beautiful. (16)

His admiration for Wayanad is so fantastic that his ecstatic mood forces him to praise the picturesque scenery of nature. Hence in awe and wonder he exclaims, "Fantastic! Kerala is so..." I am out of words to describe what I have seen. Beautiful"(16). The visit of Arush and Pooja to the Edakkal Caves makes them engage in mountaineering. They ascend along steep routes depending upon the signals etched on the trees. The mutual dependence of nature and man is emphasized and demonstrated in actual terms and conditions. Even the trees dole out assistance and help to the mountainers with their painted signs of left and right, to move ahead. The trekkers envisage a helping hand after browsing that: The secret tips for Edakkal Caves Don't take the usual route (the tarred road). Trek through the woods (take the road into the forest from the foot of the hills) to reach the ticket counter. To find the trekking route, look for a tree with a white arrow painted, pointing to the left. (45)

Arush gives vivid graphic data on environmental pollution in India. He explains how the toxic content of plastic is irresponsible and pollutes the environment. It will affect not only human beings but also the very basis of ecology. Hence he discourages Sujit from throwing away the empty packets of plastic. He himself collects them and stores them in his backpack that:

Come on, Sujit! The plastic ban is surely a good thing. A country like India generates 1.5 lakh metric tones of garbage daily and that is awful. Eighty percent of it is just dumped in landfill sites,' I tell him. I had done a project on waste management last year at college and was shocked at the discovery. Now I have a chance to show off my knowledge. Arush looks impressed.(78)

They further move high and reach Edakkal Caves with so much difficulty. They have to creep and

crawl to reach their destination. The cave is remembered as a treasure trove with its six thousand year old etchings of knowledge. They take more time to observe the drawings and the carvings of the caves. The tribals have left behind their knowledge myths, legends, rights and rituals on the walls of the caves. They are the knowledge bearers, who transmit their knowledge, environment, climate, seasons and the beings of nature for the sake of future generations. The joy of the youth is explicit as they mount steep that Arush says to Pooja:

We ascend the numerous steps slowly. At certain places we have to climb down. After a few arduous ups and downs, we reach the etchings. The six thousand-year-old etchings in the caves are awe-inspiring. This feels like a dream now. As though I have split into two, the real part is hovering around Puja, while the other soaks in the surroundings, the splendour of the caves and the engravings. It takes us about an hour and a half to see all the caves.(82)

Arush evinces much interest in the lives of the tribals of the Wayanad forest. In the museum, he even photographs the tools and implements the tribals of Kerala made use of in the Neolithic age. It further indicates the interest of Arush in Archaeology. "The other displays that catch my attention include tribal artifacts, farming implements, clay sculptures and stone idols, exhibited neatly in glass cases, with information about them. I click a lot of photographs to make sketches from" (83).

Nature serves as a fulcrum in the study of ecocriticism. It is not a mere manifestation of beauty. It is also a positive source of life and energy when well utilized. But it turns against man when ill used. In the Indian context, nature is worshipped and adored. At the same time, it is exploited also. It is not the question of man's superiority but he should take into consideration the superiority of himself as well as nature and its beings by way of lauding biocentrism. Preeti Shenoy in her novel *When Love Came Calling* (2020) accords a high priority to nature. The description of Wayanad and its beauty is her attempt to celebrate her ecological interest and eco central world

view.

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