



ECO-CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF EASTERINE KIRE'S NOVEL DON'T RUN MY LOVE

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ABSTRACT

This paper delves into the intrinsic connection between human beings and the natural environment, asserting that they are interwoven for the sustenance of humanity. A focal point of this study is the narrative prowess of Easterine Kire, particularly her ability to vividly portray Nagaland, transporting readers' hearts and minds directly to the scenic expanse of Kohima Hills. By examining Kire's literary landscape, this research illuminates the profound impact of literature in fostering environmental consciousness and advocating for the preservation of our natural world. The examination not only highlights the aesthetic appeal of Kire's portrayal but also emphasizes the pressing need for increased environmental stewardship in present-day society. Additionally, it investigates the socio-cultural ramifications of Kire's narratives, examining how they encourage a more profound bond with the natural world and prompt readers to reassess their interactions with the environment. Through a comprehensive analysis, this study seeks to underscore literature's capacity to effect transformative change in environmental perspectives and advocate for sustainable behaviors.

KEYWORDS : Nagaland, Human-nature connection, Narrative portrayal, Literature and environment

Easterine Kire, a prolific writer hailing from the Angami Naga tribe in modern times, has generated a substantial corpus of literary creations. Her expansive oeuvre comprises more than 20 publications composed in English across diverse genres including poetry, fiction, non-fiction, and children's literature, thereby demonstrating her versatile and multifaceted literary acumen. Amidst this extensive array, Kire undertakes a profound exploration aimed at fostering a deep-rooted bond with her Naga heritage and capturing the quintessence of existence in the hill regions.

A branch of literary theory is ecocriticism that investigates the connection between literature and the natural world. By analyzing the way nature and the natural world are portrayed in literary texts, that adopt an earth-centered perspective on literary studies. This branch of study explores how nature is perceived and portrayed in literature while taking into account the interaction between humans and the environment. Jacques Rousseau stated about nature that, "the state of nature was the purest and best form of human existence." (Nayar, 2009)

Ecocriticism is applied to literature by examining the way the setting is portrayed in writings, encompassing the application of beliefs, metaphors, and cultural interpretations of the natural world. The ecological critics emphasize the importance of literature and language in transferring beliefs regarding nature, and they call for a thorough examination of the moral and artistic quandaries raised by environmental concerns. Rao depicts that "Eco-criticism stresses the intimate connections between word and world, art and nature, book and earth, and it pleads for a , more biocentric world view, including non-human forms" (Chandra & Das, 2007). The researcher seeks to comprehend cultural, social interactions, and moral implications of human relationships with the natural world as they are portrayed in literary works by examining fiction via an ecocritical framework.

A pivotal concept within ecocriticism revolves around the concept of inter connectedness, positing that all organisms are intricately linked and reliant upon one another within the broader ecosystem. Kire elucidates this concept by delineating characters whose experiences are profoundly intertwined with the surrounding natural milieu. Whether through the protagonist's intimate connection with her land or the villagers' dependence on the forest for their sustenance

and economic viability, Kire elucidates the inseparability of human existence from the natural environment. These words serve as a right example. "That tree served as the only landmark for the village of seers, a boundary between the natural and the supernatural" (Kire, 2017)

Eco criticism, an academic framework originating in the latter part of the 20th century, directs attention towards the ecological dimensions within literary works, scrutinizing depictions of nature and human-environment interactions therein. Within *Don't Run, My Love*, Kire adeptly integrates the narratives of her characters with the verdant expanse of Nagaland's natural landscapes, encompassing forests, rivers, and mountains. Through this literary technique, readers are prompted to reflect upon the intricate interrelationships between human beings and the natural world.

Don't Run, My Love by Easterine Kire is a gripping examination of green criticism, a sub field of literary criticism that investigates the connection between fiction and the natural world. The book explores the intricate relationships that exist between cultural heritage, identity, and environment in an unidentified Naga community. To exemplify, the initial scene of the narrative unfolds within a paddy field, where the major protagonists are depicted engaged in labor.

The two main protagonists, Visenuo and her daughter Atuonuo, are portrayed as independent women who subvert patriarchal expectations by arranging their lives around one another. They coexist peacefully with the landscape and its the seasons, having a respectful and mutually dependent connection with the natural environment. In the familial context of Atuonuo, the maternal figure assumes ownership of the agricultural fields, yet her capacity to engage in cultivation hinges upon the assistance rendered by her daughter due to her widowhood. The sustenance of their livelihood is intricately intertwined with the soil, upon which they rely for nourishment. This balance is upset when Kevi, a charming stranger, arrives. Desire, having possession, and dominance are introduced. His approaches to Atuonuo are interpreted as an infringement on her autonomy, highlighting the significance of respect and permission in interpersonal interactions.

The rich tapestry of images created by Kire's evocative

depictions of the natural world from the mystical wood apple tree to the stretched rice fields highlights the novel's ecocritical concerns. In particular, the tree echoes the protagonists' hardships and victories by representing resiliency and continuity. "We have to find the great wood apple tree and then we will be safe" (Kire, 2017). Visenuo's cautionary remarks to her daughter Atuonuo are indicative of the characteristics of the wood apple tree. "Don't touch them. No one picks the wood apples gets back home alive" (Kire, 2017).

Easterine Kire's literary work, *Don't Run, My Love*, intricately weaves a narrative that is firmly entrenched in the cultural and environmental milieu of Nagaland, presenting a vivid portrayal of human experiences interwoven with the natural ecosystem. Employing an ecocritical perspective enables a profound exploration of the complex interplay between human beings and their surroundings as depicted in Kire's narrative. This analytical approach facilitates an examination of themes such as interconnectedness, environmental decline, and the pursuit of sustainable practices elucidated within Kire's literary creation.

In the novel, Kire skillfully combines critical thinking, feminist ideology, and environmental criticism to provide a complex portrait of a community debating issues of long-term viability, sense of self, and sovereignty. She emphasizes the value of protecting biodiversity and the concepts of permission and autonomy in interpersonal interactions via the encounters of her characters. To summarize, Easterine Kire's novel is a riveting investigation of ecocriticism, diving into the interconnectedness of mankind and the environment, the consequences of environmental deterioration, and the pursuit of resilience. Kire's powerful writing encourages readers to consider their interactions with the natural world and the pressing need for responsible environmental management in an increasingly vulnerable ecology.

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