



Transdisciplinary Theories in Kavery Nambisan's The Scent of Pepper

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Abstract

This article aims to explore theories such as Ecocriticism, Feminism and Cultural Perspectives in Kavery Nambisan's *The Scent of Pepper*. *The Scent of Pepper* belongs to the category of domestic fiction. The characters in the novel and the ecocritical perspective share a deep love of the environment and are prominent in the novel. The flora and fauna in the novel are portrayals of picturesqueness and vividness. The feminist aspect is that, although having considerable endurance and tolerance, women also have emotional sensitivity. The novel likewise encompasses the myths, beliefs, traditions and culture of the Kodagu community and deals with a cultural perspective. This paper elaborates on the views of the ideas in order to highlight how feminism, cultural identity, and ecological perspectives are perceived.

Keywords: *feminism, ecocriticism, culture, tradition, picturesque*

Introduction

Kavery Nambisan has practised surgery in India. Currently, she is in charge of a learning centre for the kids of workers in Maharashtra as well as a medical facility. Kavery Nambisan wrote for children's periodicals using her former marital name, Kavery Bhatt. She contributed stories to the now-gone children's publication *Target*. She also provided writing for *Eve's Weekly* and *Femina*. Nambisan has written several adult novels with a wide range of themes. *The Truth*, her debut book published under the name Kavery Bhatt. *The Hills of Angheri* (2005), *Mango-Coloured Fish* (1998), *On Wings of Butterflies* (2002) are some of her popular works.

The Scent of Pepper by Kavery Nambisan, published in 1996, is a thorough fictional exploration of the Kodava culture. It paints a fantastic picture of the ambitious, ferocious, and martial Kodavas, who are the owners of enormous coffee estates. The Kaleyanda clan, who possess substantial areas of coffee plantations in Coorg, is detailed in the novel. Kavery Nambisan is a native speaker of Coorg, a hilly region of Karnataka also referred to be Scotland of India.

A glimpse of the novel

At a period when the British have just seized this isolated province, anxious seventeen-year-old Nanji is married into the powerful Kaleyanda family, headed by the Rao Bahadur. Even as the British rulers settle into a life suitable for royalty among coffee and pepper plantations, her entry into a new home is made easier by the generosity of her husband Baliyanna, a gifted veterinary surgeon. Nanji remains steadfast and important to her husband and house despite enduring thirteen pregnancies, her husband's obsession with the wife of a British plantation, and the birth of a lame son, Subbu.

The family is soon, however, besieged by problems: the British rulers are no longer benign; one of Baliyanna's brothers marries a woman of British ancestry; and the Rao Bahadur develops acute depression, a

condition that is common to the region. To make matters worse, Subbu enters politics, starts to dress in coarse Khadi, and demonstrates his disdain for wine, the Kodavas' preferred alcoholic beverage.

Ecocritical and Feministic characteristic

The portrayal of Nanji by Kavery Nambisan creates a magnetic attraction between the reader and her strength, honesty, and pragmatic outlook on life. The basic idea of ecocriticism that nature and culture are intertwined with one another and with human nature is well reflected in Nanji, the protagonist's character. Nanji is still a devoted supporter of the soil and showers it with her love and affection as she cherishes and maintains it. Because she is familiar with the Coorg environment, which is lovingly captured in Nanji's internal and reciprocal co-existing relationship with nature, Nambisan has strong ecocritical strains.

The reader can see the lovely surroundings of the Coorg region, which is awash with tall mountains, magnificent flora, and fauna that, depending on how the locals treat it, can either maintain or destroy the wealth of the area. The British who lives there fall in love with Coorg's tranquillity and frequently find it difficult to leave. *The Scent of Pepper* is a book that is as much about Nanji as it is about the local environment. Every character in the book is unintentionally connected to Nanji, who appears to spread the novel's essence and is effortlessly woven into the story by Nambisan.

Nambisan also treated the novel with the Kodagu community ancestor's anger causes the coffee output to plummet one year, nature in this story becomes more than just a pretty setting. For this reason, the author makes observations about the several festivals that mark the passing of the seasons and their roles concerning agriculture. For instance, holidays like the Kalipodh, Puthari, and Shankramana are observed to honour nature's wealth and ability to revitalise the people and the region's body and soul. "There will be no escaping the anger of our ancestors. Kodagu will be punished" (*The Scent of Pepper*,17).

Nanji is successfully shaped by her Nambisan heritage and connection to the Coorg environment since she is constantly pictured cultivating the plain dirt with her hands and making it as worthwhile as she can. Nobody can distinguish between Nanji's body and soul, which appear to be intertwined with nature and her surroundings. Through Nanji, Kavery Nambisan establishes a fantastic working alliance and ties that are rooted in domestic realism in the book. What Nambisan skilfully tries to portray is the woman's realm, which extends from the home to the outside world, and how she successfully oversees the efficient running of the family and agricultural activities.

If Nanji is busy with the great duty of providing her family and the retinue of staff with wholesome meals, pickling fish, and making delectables for various holidays, she is also content to sow, transplant seeds, and observe rogue coffee plant leaves. Through Nanji, Nambisan has talked extensively about the Coorg region and the Coorg way of life.

Unlike other women, Nanji doesn't appear to like the feminine pastimes of knitting, sewing, or gardening. In contrast, she haphazardly scatters the seeds in her backyard, allowing a wide variety of plants to thrive as opposed to the tidy areas of landscaping that grace many Coorg homes. Nanji doesn't try to limit nature's blossoming; instead, she flourishes in disarray. Nanji frowns at Mallige's sensitive temperament and disposition as she works on adorning the house with her handmade crafts and starts to question her ability and efficiency to govern a family.

As seen in the story, Nanji perseveres with her responsibilities and makes sure the family is taken care of after Baliyanna's lack of will to live and genetic predisposition to depression led to his death. Nanji ages throughout the story and outlives both her husband and her dead children. Subbu, her sixth son, is the only one left to care for her. When Subbu's son Thimmu begins razing trees for lumber against his protests and Subbu's powerlessness, this shows the scope of the commercial development in Coorg. In his dream, the sturdy Coorg trees are in mourning and are stumbling toward him while heavily bleeding. The tragic image that Nambisan skilfully crafts is evocative of contemporary India, where the environment, nature and women are continuously destroyed to support man's growth and nourishment.

Cultural Aspect in the novel

The majority of Coorg women live in Kodagu village. In contrast to other Indian ethnic groups, educated women adhere to traditional culture. There is no dowry system. Kodava woman devotes her entire being to improving her husband's home. Beginning the story as a regular lady who relies on her father before marriage, Nanji gradually transforms into the head of the family following the passing of her father-in-law.

Appachu, her brother-in-law, is not welcomed by Chambavva and Baliyanna because he converted to Christianity and wed a white woman. Nanji, on the other hand, shows him love and care and even goes as far as to assist him when he is in need the love Nanji shows him. "The green casket with one hundred and eight silver rupee coins and eighteen gold sovereigns ...Nanji cared for him as well as she could. He called her Baliyakka and said she was a goddess" (*The Scent of Pepper*, 156,157). The Kodavas tradition forbids Appachu's burial in their land while he is in his latter stages. But Nanji seems to have been a protest icon long before her time. She makes a significant effort to perform Appachu's final rites on their property.

Nanji worked hard to take care of the kids, group them, discipline them, and love them as a family. She not only works in the fields but also pioneers innovative farming techniques, most notably pepper cultivation in Coorg. Subbu, the beloved son of Nanji, grows up, takes part in the war for freedom, is arrested, and after being freed, marries Mallige. After several times without a job, he eventually enters the ranks. He eventually leaves the military and looks after a coffee farm. The culture of the Kaleyanda does not seem to be rigid or fixed. As time goes on, it seems to change. Its adaptability is demonstrated by the lives of Nanji's mother-in-law Chambavva and Nanji's daughter-in-law Mallige, both of whom are reluctant to perform household tasks and other duties. Chambavva prefers visiting Mallige in Bangalore and the widow's home which is meant only for widows.

Conclusion

In *The Scent of Pepper*, Kavery Nambisan depicts the characters in a way that reflects feminist, ecocritical, and cultural symbolism. Particularly Nanji, who enters the story as the protagonist and to whom every other character is unintentionally tied. In reality, Nanji embodies the concepts of "Oikos" as the greatest home and "Kritis" as the best house judge and keeper of the house to the highest degree. Nanji, Chambavva, and Mallige these three women who persistently exemplified the actual meaning of feminism through their ideas and deeds. The book finishes on a hopeful and comforting note because Kodagu's natural beauty and unique culture are its main themes. This article sums up on the ideals of Nanji, the empowered woman, characters involvement with nature and culture basics as Kodavas, who uphold the ideas and ideals of their forefathers by adhering to the long-standing custom that set them apart from every other group and faith.

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