



# Patriarchy and Environmental Precarity: An Ecofeminist Study of Tishani Doshi's Poetry

Dr. Md Nasir Hossain

Assistant Professor, Department of English & Foreign Languages, Madanapalle Institute of Technology & Science (MITS), Deemed to be University, Andhra Pradesh, India

Orcid Id: <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-9714-0627>

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**Abstract**— *Doshi's poems explore the climate and bodies of women who are subjected to analogous forms of violence, erosion, and silence. This research article argues that Tishani Doshi's poetry challenges idealised images of nature and femininity, unveiling how women and the environment are abused under the hierarchy of patriarchy and capitalist structure in India. By applying the ecofeminist thought of Vandana Shiva, Val Plumwood, and Ariel Salleh, this paper presents that Doshi's treatment of nature is far more critical than mere sentimentalism. She understands the exploitation of nature to be structural and cyclical, rather than incidental. In this relation, the fortified language of Doshi's poems is steeped with rhythm and imagery that protest the convergence of economic, gendered, and colonial violence exercised upon the land, and more significantly upon women. The positive side of this convergence, however, is that the language encapsulates layers of resistance: the memory of the oppressed and the solidarity and love of the women. Consequently, Doshi's poems highlight that the reclamation of nature and gender justice is a simultaneous and inseparable process that requires a disintegration of the controlling logic that renders both women and nature disposable.*



**Keywords**— *Ecofeminism, Patriarchy, Environmental Degradation, Female Resilience, Ecological Justice, & Resistance.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The imbalance of social power structures means there is one overriding class, patriarchal men, who silence and monopolise the women's voices, labour, and autonomy. Just like a spreading cancer, it needs urgent intervention. Feminist activists rightly argue that oppression is not just interpersonal but involves the embedding of social structures like family, religion, polity, state, etc., where a system of gender-based oppression is normalised (Walby, 1990; Menon, 2012). In the context of India, patriarchy stands inter-sectioned with class, caste, gender, religion, and region, which heightens the oppression of women and manages their bodies, sexuality, and social roles and responsibilities. Patriarchal norms of cultural valorisation of obedience, silence, and sacrifice tend to mask structural violence, and literary texts often unveil this socio-cultural

violence. Such representations show that, rather than a thing of the past, patriarchy is a flexible controlling structure that is responsive to the social, cultural, political, and economic realities of the time.

Understanding the current ecological crisis involves analysing the human-centred models of progress that stem from the legacies of capitalism and colonialism. Many environmental scholars and activists argue that the logic of domination that has been applied to nature (and which is congruent with all forms of social oppression) views the land, the forests, and all forms of non-human life as constituents to be used and abused and not as integral parts of a living system (Merchant, 1980; Gadgil & Guha, 1995). India and other postcolonial settings' ecological degradation processes disadvantage marginalised groups, especially women, who suffer the consequences of water

scarcity, food insecurity, and environmental migration (Shiva, 1988). Environmental mismanagement is not the only factor contributing to the crisis. It further illustrates an ethical failing where human progress is disassociated from environmental responsibility.

Feminine dissent acts against the layered and combined violence of patriarchal oppression and systematic ecological destruction. Feminist and ecofeminist scholars argue that dissent should be seen not as a passive form of endurance, but as a form of autonomy that reframes, negotiates, and refuses within a given structure of oppression (Agarwal, 1992; Gaard, 1993). Women's dissent, for example, is often expressed through everyday acts of remembering and caring, community building, and reclaiming their autonomy through narratives. In literature, women's dissent often challenges and critiques the dominant narratives of oppression and victimhood by illuminating women as epistemic agents, whose lived experiences provide different ways of relating to the land, labour, and life (Plumwood, 1993). Such portrayals of dissent strategically do not construct it as a form of individual, personal power, but as a collective social, political, and moral injustice response. Rural women's unpaid labour and contribution to the social and economic sustenance of the environment are often overlooked, despite the fact that they are the ones responsible for collecting fuelwood, water, and performing some agricultural tasks (Agarwal, 1992). The deeper and complex relationship between patriarchal oppression and environmental degradation is illustrated with the deeper levels of deforestation and the (over)exploitation of water resources that both rural women depend on for their livelihoods, and increase their subjugation by adding more layers to their oppression (Shiva, 1993).

The integration of patriarchy, ecological crisis, and resilience unveils the importance of women's roles as both social justice activists and resistance against the destruction of the environment. Ecofeminism brings attention to the interlinked systems of oppression that both exploit nature and subordinate women. Starting in the late 1970s, this framework builds on the ideas of academics like Merchant (1980) and Shiva (1988), who argue that patriarchal ideology shapes women and nature as passive assets to be utilised, managed and controlled. Cultural ecofeminism, in this framework, tends to be more celebratory due to women's heightened spiritual associations with the earth (Warren, 2000), whereas the more critical strand, usually labelled materialist ecofeminism, concentrates on the economically exploitative structures (Mies & Shiva, 1993). In India, ecofeminism was brought to the forefront with the 1970s *Chipko* Movement, wherein women of the Himalayas embraced trees as a means of protesting deforestation

(Shiva, 1988). While some scholars viewed this as a demonstration of women's ecological awareness, Agarwal (1992) demonstrated that such activism was the result of gendered divisions of labour and survival, as opposed to a relational or spiritual connection to nature.

Likewise, the *Narmada Bachao Andolan* (NBA) from the 1980s made visible how the displacement from dam constructions was gendered, making women pivotal in the resistance (Mehta & Movik, 2014). These movements illustrate what Baviskar (1995) describes as the 'double critique' of Indian ecofeminism, which encompasses both environmental devastation and the patriarchal order and proposes a different alternative. Nonetheless, the field is still contentious, particularly with respect to essentialism. While Plumwood (1993) and Agarwal (1992) warn against biologically deterministic arguments, postcolonial critics like Spivak (1988) argue that there is a necessity to consider the neocolonial power relations. Contemporary scholarship emphasises intersectional frameworks (Salleh, 2017) that explore the environmental crisis through the intertwined relations of gender with caste, class, and race, while decolonial frameworks reposition indigenous ways of knowing as a sustainable alternative to Western development (Shiva, 2005).

Tishani Doshi's poetry is a means of personal and political expression and is a treasure trove. Doshi's poetry deals with social issues such as environmental degradation, the body as a site of struggle, and women's resistance to ecological and patriarchal oppression. Additionally, Doshi's poetry highlights the plight of women in a hierarchical patriarchal system and also presents the ecological concerns of the modern world. Consequently, her poetry deals with the human body, nature, and social norms in a manner that is in line with ecofeminist thought. In her poem "The End of the World" (2006), Doshi highlights the fragility of nature and the human. Through imagery and metaphor, the poet Doshi criticises the exploitation of nature, highlighting the environment as a space of physical destruction but also as a symbol of the collective trauma caused by patriarchal structures.

By emphasising the importance of Tishani Doshi's poetry, we examine how literary narratives can be an important means of ecofeminist resistance. Tishani Doshi's poetry not only symbolises the plight of women in a patriarchal and ecologically destroyed world but is also a means of resistance. The poetry resists the dominant discourse of ecological destruction and the oppression of women, positioning women at the forefront of the struggle for ecological justice.

Further, Doshi's poetry also alludes to the story of colonial and postcolonial exploitation, in which the

commodification of nature is parallel to the commodification of women's bodies. The poet's reading of these essences provides a critical reading of how colonial histories and present economic systems continue to influence the treatment of both women and the environment. The feminist critique of colonialism, as understood by ecofeminist theorists, is expressed in Doshi's reading of both personal and collective histories, in which ecological destruction is linked to patriarchal power structures and cultural silencing.

The first example, "The White Album," in which the poet Doshi combines the essences of loss, disintegration, and ecological destruction. The poem highlights the ecological crisis from a deeply personal and intimate point of view, emphasising the effects of environmental destruction on individuals and communities, particularly women, who are the victims of both environmental and socio-cultural destruction.

Consequently, the relation between environmental crises, patriarchy, and their interrelations in the domain of ecofeminism has been a subject of intense academic study in recent years. The interrelations between these essences are of utmost significance in comprehending the relations between gender, ecology, and society. In this regard, Doshi's poetry provides a deep literary insight into comprehending the interrelations between gender, nature, and resistance. This study aims to explore the interrelations between the essences of ecofeminism and how Tishani Doshi resists the dominant patriarchal discourses through her in-depth understanding of the environment, gender, and the relationship between human beings and nature in her poetry.

The rationale for carrying out this research stems from the imperative to highlight the interconnections between patriarchy, ecological crisis, and resilience in contemporary literary texts. Tishani Doshi's poetry provides a critical space to highlight these essences, engaging with ecofeminism in a manner that is both biographical and political. Doshi's poetry engages not only with the ecological and gendered concerns of our times but also challenges us to think anew about the possibilities of resistance and transformation. By situating Tishani Doshi's poetry in the context of ecofeminist theory, this paper aims to critically decode the representative role of literature in highlighting the complex interconnections between gender, ecology, and power.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study adopts ecofeminist literary criticism as its primary methodological paradigm, integrating a critical

reading of Tishani Doshi's poetry with an interdisciplinary approach to examine the convergences of gender oppression and ecological decay. The methodological paradigm integrates four primary approaches: a close reading of poetic imagery and symbolism to interpret the ecofeminist thematic content; a comparative literary criticism approach to situate Doshi's poetry within the Indian literary traditions of Sangam poetry and bhakti poetry to interpret the subversion of patriarchal narratives; a historical and cultural contextualisation approach to locate the poems within the socio-political context of India, including its environmental movements (such as *Chipko*, *Narmada Bachao Andolan*) and ecological disasters (such as the Bhopal gas tragedy, farmer suicides); and an interdisciplinary integration approach to combine feminist theory, environmental studies, and postcolonial studies to examine the systematic oppression.

The theoretical paradigm draws upon ecofeminist theory, specifically Vandana Shiva's (1988) notion on the patriarchal subjugation of women and nature, Maria Mies and Vandana Shiva's (1993) analysis of gendered labour and ecological degradation, Val Plumwood's (1993) critique of rationalist hierarchies, Ariel Salleh's (2017) notion of "embodied materialism," and Gayatri Spivak's (1988) subaltern studies. The analysis is further informed by the application of Indian feminist ecology (Agarwal, 1992; Nagarajan, 2019), which examines class, caste, and ecologically mediated violence; postcolonial ecocriticism (Guha, 2000; Gadgil & Guha, 1995), which connects ecological destruction to colonial and neoliberal exploitation; and performance theory (Meduri, 2005), that unveils the manner in which classical dance constitutes gendered bodies. The theoretical perspective also addresses ecofeminist theorists such as Shiva (1988) and Plumwood (1993) to highlight the ecological and gender aspects of patriarchal domination, applying their theories to interpret how Doshi's poetry subverts the hierarchical order. Together, these methods and theories suggest the manner in which Doshi's poetry unveils the systematic correspondences between the domination of women and the destruction of the environment, subverts essentialised dualisms (nature/culture, pure/impure) that are administered by patriarchy, nationalism, and imagines dissent and resistance through the discourses of bodily autonomy, ecological memory, and collective defiance.

## III. ANALYSIS: GENDERED BODIES, DAMAGED ECOLOGIES, AND ACTS OF RESISTANCE IN DOSHI'S WRITING

Tishani Doshi's poetry highlights the female body that stands at the fault line between the destruction of nature and

patriarchal domination. The destruction of nature in her poetry is the destruction of the body, and it exposes the mechanisms of oppression that coexist for women and nature. It is not the suffering but the language of resistance that gets exposed. Tishani Doshi's poetry (re)designs ecology as a feminist text of struggle and survival.

### 3.1. Patriarchy and Ecological Isolation in "Summer in Madras"

Tishani Doshi's "Summer in Madras" highlights patriarchal systems in its portrayal of the disintegration of a family under the stifling heat of the Madras summer. It portrays how interconnected systems of oppression affect both women and nature, illustrating clear imagery to disclose how patriarchal domination is aligned in domestic spaces and ecological degradation (Shiva, 1988). The poem opens with the assertion that "Everyone in the house is dying," immediately contrasting the disintegration of the family and the environment (Doshi, 2017, p.7), thereby casting the family as a microcosm of the environment in disarray, where the disintegration of humanity and nature are reflected in each other. The incarceration of the mother in an "air-conditioned room" represents the alienation of modernity from nature, where physical pain is alleviated at the expense of mental suffering, as "rivers break their dams against her nerves" represent the suppression of female power, which is now "turbulent and destructive" (Doshi, 2017, p.7), validating Shiva's claim that patriarchal modernisation deprives women of their traditional ecological function (Shiva, 1988).

On the other hand, the actions of the father unveil the performative nature of patriarchal ecological connection as he "stalks verandas, offering pieces of his skin to the rows of lurid gulmohars," a mere ritualistic act towards nature (Doshi, 2017, p.7), with the gulmohar trees representing colonial ecological imposition, as per ecofeminist views on colonial ecological destruction. The father's desperate attempt at "stuffing his ears with desiccated mango husks" to "still the advancing armies of the past" indicates patriarchal denial and the utilisation of natural resources to suppress historical trauma (Doshi, 2017, p.7), aligning with Val Plumwood's views on rationalist hierarchies that reduce nature to a lifeless resource (Plumwood, 1993). In this context, the brother's action stands for a subversive strategy towards death and nature as he playfully taps "death's umbrella" and sings (Doshi, 2017, p.7), aligning with Ariel Salleh's "embodied materialism," where resistance is created through alternative, non-hegemonic relations with nature (Salleh, 2017). The ecological imagery in the poem, for instance, "air-conditioned room," "rivers breaking their dams," "gulmohars," and "desiccated mango husks," further reinforces the ecofeminist view as they symbolise

modern alienation, colonialism, and the redundancy of patriarchal domination. Through reflection of the disintegration of a family in an environmental context in the poem "Summer in Madras", the poem conveys ecofeminist elements in that it shows how patriarchal societies provide exploitative answers that fail in the end as they continue to oppress both women and nature, and the brother's role indicates creative resistance and alternative relationships and spaces.

### 3.2. Socio-Ecological Crises in "What the Sea Brought In"

Doshi's "What the Sea Brought In" (2017) emphasises the interlinking crises of the destruction of the environment and gender violence. Shiva rightly argues that the destruction of nature and the abuse of women are interlinked (Shiva, 1988), which is the central core for interpreting the poem's representation of the sea's trash, human loss, and cultural deterioration. The poem is critical of the capitalist use, destruction of the environment, and commodification of women, which are more pronounced in India's increasingly industrialising and patriarchal society.

The sea is a dumping ground for human trash and a symbol of collective trauma. "Brooms, brassieres, empty bottles of booze. / The tip of my brother's missing forefinger" (Doshi, 2017, p.11) symbolises the use of nature as a dumping ground for human violence and neglect, which is reminiscent of industrial accidents in India's informal labour market. Moreover, the "two ghost children foraging their way home" symbolise the crisis of missing children in India, particularly the most vulnerable ones in the marginalised sections of society, such as women and Dalits (Agarwal, 1992).

The list of waste, "rubber, leather, Rexine, felt" (Doshi, 2017, p.11), in the poem symbolises the increasing coastal pollution in Indian cities such as Mumbai and Chennai. The destruction of cultural practices is emphasised by "decapitated marigolds" and "broken nautilus," which comment on the effects of industrial pollution and consumer culture in degrading both the environment and cultural icons (Gadgil & Guha, 1995). In addition, the "betrayed school friend stuck in the dunes like the legs of Ozymandias" symbolises the emptiness of unregulated development in displacing marginalised communities, such as the *Adivasis*, who are made ecological refugees (Shiva, 2016).

The poem also exposes the commodification of women's physical bodies, particularly in the "Virginity returned in a chastity box" (Doshi, 2017, p.11), which reflects the social perception of women's purity and subordination (Menon, 2012). The "soiled mattresses" (Doshi, 2017, p.11) are symbolic of the violence against

women, a concern in India, while the “feral creature of love” (Doshi, 2017, p.12) growing “from gravestones of breakers” symbolises the resilience and regeneration of love and life, despite the systematic violence (Doshi, 2017, p.12; Mies & Shiva, 1993).

Further, the gathering of symbols like “letters of love, letters of lust, the 1980s, funeral dust” represents the loss of cultural memory in the decaying urban landscape (Doshi, 2017, p.11). The “pack of poor poisoned dogs” (Doshi, 2017, p.11) represents the disregard for the urban environment and street dogs (Jalais, 2010), while the reference to “the legs of Ozymandias” (Doshi, 2017, p.11) represents the ruins of colonial hubris and exploitation that continue to shape India's environmental disasters (Guha, 2000). The reference to “the mustard jumpsuit” (Doshi, 2017, p.11) represents the agrarian crisis and farmer suicides, which have a huge impact on rural women, who are left alone as widows or as unpaid labour (Sainath, 2014).

Despite the stripped-down quality of the poem, there are moments of hope and resilience. The “barnacles house empires” (Doshi, 2017, p.12) and “the feral creature of love grows from gravestones” represent grassroots resistance and ecological renewal (Doshi, 2017, p.12), reflecting the notions of the survival of subaltern ecosystems. The “wildflowers in the fetch” (Doshi, 2017, p.12) represent the potential for growth and regeneration in the midst of destruction, representing ecofeminist ideals of sustainability, resistance, and ecological justice (Warren, 2000). Thus, the poem points to the destruction of nature and women by capitalist patriarchy.

### 3.3. Patriarchal Oppression and Female Resilience in “The Women of the Shin Yang Park Sauna, Gwangju”

Doshi's “The Women of the Shin Yang Park Sauna, Gwangju” indicates the patriarchal domination by pointing out the co-existence of the use of female bodies and nature, especially in the Indian context, where female bodies and nature are also protected and exploited (Shiva, 1988). The poem begins with the assertion of the independence of the body, “Hello, I'm naked,” (Doshi, 2017, p.54) challenging the social norms of femininity, and the women's purification rituals, stripping away “disappointment from their houses / of sternum” (Doshi, 2017, p.54), symbolically resisting patriarchal domination, conforming to the ecofeminist school of thought that identifies women and nature as a unity that is collectively subjected to social violence (Mies & Shiva, 1993). However, the “hysterectomy scars” (Doshi, 2017, p.54) on the bodies of the older women specifically highlight the poem's criticism of the medical domination of women's bodies, referring to the Indian experience of forced sterilisation and the exploitation of natural assets (Shiva, 1988), and the image

of “legs spread like avenues of thick black trees” (Doshi, 2017, p.54) further representing women's power and ecological fragility. The women's characterisation as “warriors—plundered or having plundered” (Doshi, 2017, p.54) highlights the dual nature of the women's character as victims and survivors, which corresponds to the ecofeminist assertion of oppression, wherein the “threat of annihilation” (Doshi, 2017, p.54) that looms over the women symbolises the degradation of nature under the capitalist patriarchal order (Warren, 2000).

The older woman's gaze, “the way death / might look at life, with pity” (Doshi, 2017, p.54), is itself the embodiment of intergenerational trauma, which addresses of the unequal suffering of Indian women in the wake of ecological catastrophes such as water shortages (Agarwal, 1992), even as her never-ending task of pouring cold water (Doshi, 2017, p.54) symbolises the struggle to survive in the face of adversity. The sauna itself becomes a site of counter-hegemony, wherein social “gossiping” (Gramsci, 1971; Doshi, 2017, p.54) and corporeal intimacy challenge the hegemonic discourse of the male order, symbolising the solidarity of Indian rural women's collectives in fighting back against exploitation through their labour and words (Shiva, 1988). The final lines of the poem, “You are me, / I am you, neither one of us immaculate” (Doshi, 2017, p.55), reject the ideologies of patriarchal and environmental purity, addressing the reality of women and nature, and defying the Brahmanical and capitalist dualisms that attempt to control and regulate both (Mies & Shiva, 1993).

### 3.4. Violence, Labour, and Resistance in “Monsoon Poem”

Doshi's “Monsoon Poem” indicates the violence of patriarchy and nature, and the destruction of the romanticised vision of nature and femininity, while exposing the systematic connection between them. The poem questions the patriarchal domination that employs both women and nature, placing the monsoon, a symbol of fertility and rebirth, as a location of gender and nature contradictions. Doshi subverts the conventional imagery of monsoon (jasmine, mangoes, and peacocks), which normally sexualises nature as a passive female (Rao, 2004), by integrating it with the image of rotten decay. The lines “Expect to hear a lot / about erotic consummation inferred / by laburnum gyrations and bamboo / syncopations” (Doshi, 2017, p.20) resonate with the voyeuristic male gaze that is embedded in the Indian poetic tradition, such as the *Kuruntokai's* objectification of women and land (Ramaswamy, 1997). The poem further subverts the romantic notion of fertility through grotesque moments, “mosquito blood, dappled / and fried against the wires of a bug-zapping / paddle,” unveiling the violence hidden

behind the romantic idealisation of rain (Doshi, 2017, pp.20-21). At the heart of this subversion is the metaphor of mud, which “sneaks up / like a sleek-gilled vandal to catch hold / of your ankles” (Doshi, 2017, p.20), aligning with the metaphor of the invisibilised labour of rural women who are crucial to agrarian economies but are marginalised (Agarwal, 1992). The ambivalence of the monsoon, which is both life-giving and oppressive (“the sky’s steady bludgeoning”), embodies the burden of women, who are idealised as life-giving but subjected to violence (Shiva, 1988). The beautiful contrast between the romantic monsoon stories and the unspoken pain is captured by Doshi: “Notice / how hardly anyone mentions the word / death, even though the fridge leaks / and the sheets have been damp for weeks” (Doshi, 2017, p.21), where the dampness is a metaphor for patriarchal domination. The pictures of scavenging crabs and dying mayflies represent the entropy of life that is erased from the romanticised natural imagery and align with the ecofeminist essence. The final repudiation of devotional submission in the poem, “those old poems / led us to believe that men were mountains... / we should be delighted to be taken / in drowning, in devotion” (Doshi, 2017, p.22), critiques the bhakti tradition’s idealisation of female suffering (Ramanujan, 1981), promoting instead a resistance against gendered and ecological subjugation (Mies & Shiva, 1993). In exposing the monsoon’s “post-coital bliss” as a conceit for exploitation (Doshi, 2017, p.21), Doshi repositions women and nature as agents of resistance, subverting both literary and political systems of domination that commodify women’s bodies and nature. The poem thus moves beyond the metaphor of the seasons to resonate with an ecofeminist practice of survival, in which liberation is found through the recognition of mud, decay, and resistance as essential to the process.

### 3.5. Ecofeminist Resistance and Reclamation in “Girls Are Coming Out of the Woods”

Doshi’s “Girls Are Coming Out of the Woods” (2017) is an unflinching poem that explores the feminist spirit of resistance with ecologically aware metaphors, where the subjugation of women and the destruction of nature are inextricably intertwined (Shiva, 1988).

The poet Doshi critically observes that the defining metaphor of girls coming out of the woods is one of danger and defiance; in Indian folklore, the forest is a borderland, which is at the same time sacred and dangerous. Doshi’s image of girls “wrapped in cloaks and hoods, / carrying iron bars and candles” (Doshi, 2017, p.38) is one of vulnerability turned to resistance. The wounds they bear, “collected on acres of premature grass and city buses, in temples and bars,” represent a metaphorical convergence of the

destruction of nature and the abuse of women (Doshi, 2017, p.38). The woods are thus both the location of patriarchal oppression and resistance, as in the *Chipko* Movement, where women literally defended the forests (Shiva, 1988).

Doshi portrays how patriarchal societies commoditise women and nature. The chilling picture of girls with “panties tied around their lips” represents the repression of women, along with the destruction of nature due to deforestation (Doshi, 2017, p.38). Even the girls’ “coffins decorated with briar” (Doshi, 2017, p.38) represent natural forms defying domination, triggering movements like the *Narmada Bachao Andolan* (Agarwal, 1992). Doshi converts victims into unstoppable forces; girls “leaking secrets from unfastened thighs,” echoing rivers bursting dams (Doshi, 2017, p.38), and “bodies pushing against water” (Doshi, 2017, p.39), represent rivers like the Ganga fighting back against their destruction. By referring to the spirits of wronged women (*bhoota*) residing in natural locations, Doshi marks the link between memory and ecological haunting (Nagarajan, 2019). By referring to actual events such as the Delhi *Nirbhaya* case, she marks the collective memory through human and ecological suffering. The last repetition, “They’re coming. They’re coming,” is a warning of the collective punishment that is soon to follow, comparing the girls’ return to ecological disasters demanding collective punishment (Doshi, 2017, p.39). Thus, Doshi unveils how the woods are a metaphorical space that links patriarchal violence and the destruction of nature, and how the resistance is based on collective resurgence and memory.

### 3.6. Patriarchy and Nationalism in “Your Body Language Is Not Indian! Where I Am Snubbed at a Cocktail Party by a Bharatnatyam Dancer”

Doshi’s “Your Body Language Is Not Indian! Where I Am Snubbed at a Cocktail Party by a Bharatnatyam Dancer” is a poem about the double marginalisation of women and nature in patriarchal societies, as it identifies with how both are commodified, dominated, and disciplined (Shiva, 1988). The voice in the poem resists the roles imposed on women, such as marriage, motherhood, and domestic work, and laments the cultural forces that impose reproductive submissiveness: “Do you understand the kind of resistance / involved in arriving at 37—alone, two white hairs, / the onset of wrinkles” (Doshi, 2017, p.49). In refusing the “effervescent sortie of evolution” (Doshi, 2017, p.49) and the biological determinism imposed by “scolding aunties” (Doshi, 2017, p.49) and women who “patiently flexed / their shoulders and hoiked up their knees,” (Doshi, 2017, p.49) Doshi’s work corresponds to ecofeminist thought that conceives women’s physical bodies as spaces of labour

exploitation under patriarchal capitalism (Mies & Shiva, 1993).

The speaker's assertion, "I gave a giant finger to Genes" (Doshi, 2017, p.49), further shatters the essentialist constructs that bind women to nature as passive nurturers (Plumwood, 1993). The poem intensifies its critique with the Bharatnatyam dancer's charge, "*Your body language is not Indian!*", which identifies with the nationalist and cultural typification of women's bodies, fragmenting identity as colonial land division (Spivak, 1988). The poet's defiance of the classical dance form's "incorrect mudras and aramandis" (Doshi, 2017, p.50) challenges Brahmanical and patriarchal control (Meduri, 2005), while her speaker's assertion of herself as 'quartered' into "wetland, desert, / marsh, city" (Doshi, 2017, p.50) signifies ecological and gendered territorialisation. Refusing to be bound by typified categories, the speaker asserts her hybridity, "Part sea creature, / part peach tree" (Doshi, 2017, p.50), exemplifying ecofeminist liminality that defies patriarchal enclosure (Warren, 2000). The speaker's defiance of being bound by "I refuse to wear the sins / of my progenitors in the topography of my chin" (Doshi, 2017, p.50), shatters casteist and patriarchal inheritance (Shiva, 1988), culminating in visions of "a nest underground" (Doshi, 2017, p.51) and a dance with "an easterly wind," (Doshi, 2017, p.51) where death is transformative liberation instead of extinction. The "muddy bracelets of existence" (Doshi, 2017, p.51) represent both the struggle of society and the cycle of rebirth in nature, where the female body is constructed as a site of resistance rather than control. Thus, Doshi's poem is a deconstruction of the regulation of Indian femininity in relation to reproduction, culture, and identity, and instead, it is a construction of an ecofeminist discourse of autonomy, where the body, like nature, thrives in its fluid and feral form of resistance to capitalism and nationalism.

#### IV. DISCUSSION

Ecofeminism, as explained by scholars like Vandana Shiva (1988) and Maria Mies (1993), argues that the oppression of nature and women is a result of the same ideological perspective, including colonialism, capitalism, and patriarchy. Doshi's poetry becomes a significant tool for this critique, unearthing the violence while also imagining a resistance through embodied and ecological dissent.

##### 4.1. Patriarchal Domination and Ecological Alienation

Doshi's "Summer in Madras" illustrates the extension of patriarchal domination from human relations to natural spaces. The breakdown of the family is a result of environmental degradation, where the imprisonment of the mother in an "air-conditioned room" represents the

alienation of modernity from nature (Doshi, 2017, p.7). The father's empty gesture of donating his skin to gulmohar trees represents a performative act of ecological engagement, which criticises patriarchal domination of nature (Plumwood, 1993). At the same time, the brother's interaction with death represents an alternative, non-dominating relationship with nature (Salleh, 2017), which serves as a subversive form of ecofeminist resistance.

In "Monsoon Poem," Doshi disrupts the romanticised representation of monsoon in literature, revealing its violent undertones. The poem juxtaposes the romantic representation of monsoon in literature with its horrific realities, "mosquito blood, dappled / and fried against the wires of a bug-zapping / paddle" (Doshi, 2017, pp.21-21), which reveals how patriarchal discourses mask the pain of nature and women. The wetness of the bed sheets, which is unacknowledged but oppressive, becomes a metaphor for the silenced pain of women.

##### 4.2. Gendered Violence and Environmental Exploitation

In "What the Sea Brought In", Doshi critiques the consumption and degradation of the environment under capitalism, using the prism of gendered violence. The sea, as a dumping ground for human waste, swallows "rubber, leather, Rexine, felt" as well as "Virginity returned / in a chastity box" (Doshi, 2017, p.11). This is aligned with Shiva's (1988) idea that the capitalist patriarchy seeks to commodify women and nature, making them disposable. The poem's "ghost children" and "poisoned dogs" also underscore the ecological and social vulnerability of marginalised communities in India.

In "Girls Are Coming Out of the Woods", this critique is taken to the next level, where the woods symbolise both patriarchal violence and resistance. The girls come out "wrapped in cloaks and hoods, / carrying iron bars and candles" (Doshi, 2017, p.38), symbolising the *Chipko* Movement's resistance to deforestation (Shiva, 1988). The girls' scars, stored in "temples and bars" (Doshi, 2017, p.38), symbolise the intersection of religious, urban, and environmental oppressions.

##### 4.3. Embodied Resistance and Ecological Reclamation

Doshi's "The Women of the Shin Yang Park Sauna, Gwangju" exemplifies the radical expression of autonomy over the body, where the women's nudity shatters patriarchal norms. Their "hysterectomy scars" (Doshi, 2017, p.54) challenge the medical dominance of female reproduction, exemplifying the forced sterilisations of women in India (Shiva, 1988). However, the sauna is a site of counter-hegemony, where collective unity challenges the

patriarchal discourse, much like the ecofeminist struggle against oppression through collective nurturing (Mies & Shiva, 1993).

The poem "Your Body Language Is Not Indian! Where I Am Snubbed at a Cocktail Party by a Bharatnatyam Dancer" is a radical challenge to nationalist and patriarchal control, challenging the female roles assigned by society. The poet's defiance, "I gave a giant finger to Genes," (Doshi, 2017, p.49) challenges biological determinism (Plumwood, 1993), while her fractured identity, quartered into "wetland, desert, / marsh, city," (Doshi, 2017, p.50) embodies ecological division. The poem's final imagery of a "nest underground" (Doshi, 2017, p.51) and dancing with "an easterly wind" (Doshi, 2017, p.51) implies a transformative resistance, echoing ecofeminist ideals of cyclical rebirth.

Doshi's poetry is a beautiful and profound expression of an ecofeminist critique of patriarchal and ecological violence, emphasising the dual exploitation and abuse of nature and women under capitalism and nationalism. However, Doshi's poetry also expresses a vision of resistance through bodily defiance, collective unity, and ecological reclaiming. Through the illumination of oppression and the celebration of resilience, Doshi's poetry urges a radical transformation of human relationships with nature.

## V. CONCLUSION

The article has demonstrated Tishani Doshi's critical use of ecofeminist critique to deconstruct the interrelatedness of patriarchy and environmental degradation in her poetry. Using imagery and metaphor, Doshi's poetry, in particular "Summer in Madras", "What the Sea Brought In", "The Women of the Shin Yang Park Sauna, Gwangju", "Monsoon Poem", and "Girls Are Coming Out of the Woods", "Your Body Language Is Not Indian! Where I Am Snubbed at a Cocktail Party by a Bharatnatyam Dancer", deconstructs the manner in which patriarchal systems both oppress women and degrade the environment.

Some of the key findings of this research study underscore the manner in which Doshi uses the domestic sphere as a microcosm of environmental degradation to illustrate the manner in which both women and the environment are subjected to systematic violence and alienation. Using the metaphor of environmental and gendered decay, Doshi's poetry challenges the reader to recognise the interrelated and intertwined nature of these oppressions, which are fueled by capitalist patriarchy.

The implications of this research study are far-reaching and extend beyond the boundaries of academic discourse, offering important perspectives on the manner in

which ecofeminist thought can be used to better understand socio-environmental problems. In the Indian context, where both environmental degradation and gendered violence are important concerns, Doshi's poetry offers a critical call to action. In highlighting the struggles of women and the struggles of nature, this research paper brings to the fore the necessity to adopt a more holistic approach in dealing with the issues of environmental sustainability and gender justice.

The most significant aspect of this research work is its application of ecofeminist theory to the poetry of Doshi, which brings to the fore a new perspective on her poetry, as it highlights the complicated relationships between gender, ecology, and resistance.

Looking ahead, future research could expand on this critical examination to further investigate the developing ecofeminist essences of Doshi in her poetry, particularly in the milieu of the shifting socio-political hemispheres of India. Researchers could also investigate the relationship of Doshi's poetry to the global ecofeminist movement and the significance of her poetry to transnational feminist thought. Therefore, this research paper seeks to raise new questions about the role of literature in inspiring and motivating collective action towards environmental and gender justice, which calls for further investigation into the complex relationships between power, resistance, and environmental ethics. In reflecting on the insights of Doshi's poetry, the question that we are left to ponder is: How might we, as individuals and as communities, (re)shape our relationships with nature and with each other in order to build a sustainable and resilient future?

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