

Eco-Friendliness and Human Well-being in the Marathi Short Story 'Kombdi' by Appasaheb Khot

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Background:

It is a common saying that disrespect for nature and the environment began in Modern Times, when customs became looser and much elegance was lost, as some elder one would say. I don't agree; I believe it is the way of promoting awareness about nature that has changed.

Greek philosophers such as Plato or Aristotle dealt with the natural world in the same way that they dealt with literature, politics and ethics. The respect for nature was in some way a logical consequence of what one studied, read, or simply knew. Myths condemned heroes who disrespected the natural world and told about their punishments. There was the belief that forests, crops, the sky were elements which powerful gods controlled and governed. (1)

Those stories that mixed science and fiction were all well-known. It could be said that the need to be eco-friendly was, at that time, a fact which belonged to common knowledge. When people started separating "science" from other subjects, such as literature and politics, they started concentrating on one or a few of these concepts only. In this way, the concept of common knowledge began to die out.

Human beings should be more than animals, but are they really? In Republic, by Plato, Antigone, by Sophocles, The Aeneid of Virgil, by Virgil, and On Justice Power and Human Nature, by Thucydides, it seems as though human beings really are nothing more than animals.

Animals are thought of as not caring about anyone but himself or herself. It is survival of the fittest, if you are not strong enough, someone else will take your place. Human should be caring for other human beings, if someone is in trouble, another human should help them. This is not the way it is in these 3 works. Humans don't care about anyone but themselves, they kill so they can better themselves, and don't care what happens. It seems as people are getting murdered all the time to take power, and the killer, instead of being jailed, is now the leader. (2)

In Plato's Republic, he basically designs a caste system. People are chosen at birth what level they will be in society, and there is nothing they can do about this. This is almost like a food chain. In regards to reproduction, Socrates severely regulates sex. Socrates proposes a rigged lottery to ensure that the best man has sex with the best woman, and all women and children are shared between all the men. People can only have sex within their own class to guarantee the finest genetics.

After the babies are born, the rulers will take them; the babies of the lesser classes will be left to die, whereas the babies of the upper class will take care of by nurses. This is totally barbaric, even animals know what happens to their offspring, whether they die due to a predator or they become healthy adults. In this situation it is humans being the predator. (Plato p.125)

In Antigone, Creon is about as close to an animal as you can get. He refuses to bury his own nephew, Polynices. Even if Creon didn't want him buried in Thebes, he could at least have his body sent back to his city to be buried.

Ancient Egyptian art forms are characterized by regularity and detailed depiction of human beings and the nature, and, were intended to provide company to the deceased in the 'other world'. Artists' endeavored to preserve everything of the present time as clearly and permanently as possible. Completeness took precedence over prettiness. Some art forms present an extraordinarily vivid representation of the time and the life, as the ancient Egyptian life was lived thousand of years before.

Egyptian art in all forms obeyed one law: the mode of representing man, nature and the environment remained almost the same for thousands of years and the most admired artists were those who replicated most admired styles of the past (3)

Brief Introduction to Marathi Recorded Short Stories:

It was the advent of cassette dubbing that got him profit and prompted the enterprising Marathi man called Alurkar to record P. L. Deshpande, Shankar Patil and VaPu Kale on cassettes and this was the beginning of a new era in Marathi Fiction. Many writers were inspired by the success of these audio recordings. The digital format made things very easy to listen to these stories on the go during the S.T Bus journeys.

'Kombdi' (Hen): A Short Story showing Eco-friendliness and Human Well-being:

The most well-known recorded short story narrator of these times is AppasahebKhot from Kolhapur. The story called 'hen' shows how the affectionate hen represents the grand old lady who is the mother in law of Parvati and Rangu, the quarreling daughters in law. Just like the old lady the hen cares for her offspring. She protects her chickens with complete attention. Khot has given a beautiful picture of the social life in the village. He has shown how the birds and animals are the indivisible part of people's lives. At one place he says

that hen returns home like the bullocks that are reluctant to leave their home but while returning home they don't need any directions to be given by the master.

References:**Primary Resources:**

1. Khot, Appasaheb, 'Kombdi (Hen)', An Audio Tape of the Marathi Short Story

Secondary Resources:

- Pater, Cathrien de, 'Spiritual Experiences in Nature, Eco-friendliness and Human Well-being' Paper presented at the International People and Plants Symposium, Venlo, 8 September, Aranyani Knowledge for Nature and Religion Rhenen, Netherlands, 2012.
- http://www.wordinfo.info/words/index/info/view_unit/2787/2
eco-friendly, eco-friendliness Ecologically 'friendly'; not harmful to the environment. Also applied to products manufactured with explicit regard to the environment.
- <http://www.crystalinks.com/egyptart.html>