

## **Behavioral Amelioration with Environmental Speculation in Barbara Kingsolver's Flight Behavior and Prodigal Summer**

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### **Abstract**

Barbara Kingsolver was born in Annapolis, Maryland, on April 8, 1955 to Dr. Wendell R. Kingsolver and Virginian Henry Kingsolver. Her works often focus on social justice, biodiversity and the interaction between humans and their communities and environments. Ecocriticism widely known for literary and cultural study on the global ecological predicament via entangled features of literature, culture and the physical environment. This paper throws light on the traces of ecological relationship refers to the demeanor of human beings with their own residence, neighbourhood and to their extend society to seek for the behavioural amelioration along with other survivors. While keeping track on the association, Dellarobia in *Flight Behaviour* gets trick of the trade to understand her own self that she learns from the monarch butterflies which immigrated to her in-laws farm at the same time she comprehends how to be a resilient from all her hurdles. The next novel *Prodigal Summer* highlights life of the characters from three different geographical shadows in which one of the parts involves a naturalist who resides alone on a mountain, and has an affair with a hunter. The second story engrosses of late widow struggling with her in-laws, and trying to keep her farm going. The third story engages an old man's struggles with his unconventional neighbor. The heart of the entire three stories is about the relationships between humans and the world that they dwell in throughout and connection which each every one of them maintain with animals and other non living entities. This paper highlights Improvement in behavior that happens after looking into the life cycle of animals, plants and other environmental creations.

**KEYWORDS:** Barbara Kingsolver, Ecocriticism, Human and Non Human Relationship.

Barbara Kingsolver was born in Annapolis, Maryland, on April 8, 1955 to Dr. Wendell R. Kingsolver and Virginian Henry Kingsolver. Kingsolver as a child observed great discrepancies between rich and poor as well as nearly complete racial segregation in rural Kentucky where her father spent a productive career as a physician. She valued the strength and explicit speech of the poor people she knew there, and she deeply loved the hills and woods surrounding her. She had few opportunities in Kentucky and moved for college at DePauw university in Greencastle, Indiana and then to make her permanent home in Tuscan, Arizona. She has worked at a variety of jobs, the most important being as a scientific and technical writer, as a journalist and freelance writer, and finally as a professional novelist. Her career as a novelist, thus far only about ten years long, includes the publication of four novels and four other books such as poems, short stories, non-fiction. Her works which tell the stories of vigorous and vital women in vivid and often

poetic language and which are thematically responsive to many of the major issues of our day, have been well organized and even enthusiastically received.

Her works often focus on social justice, biodiversity and the interaction between humans and their communities and environments. Her characters are frequently written around struggles for social equality, such as the hardships faced by undocumented immigrants, the working poor and single mothers. Other common themes in her work include the balancing of individuality with desire to live in a community, and the interaction and conflict between humans and the ecosystem in which they live.

Ecocriticism widely known for literary and cultural researchers to make a study on the global ecological predicament via entangled features of literature, culture and the physical environment. In *Beginning Theory*, Peter Barry says that ‘outdoor environment’ and overlapping areas which move gradually from nature to culture, along with the following lines:

Area one: ‘the wilderness’ (e.g. deserts, oceans, uninhabited continents)

Area Two: ‘the scenic sublime’ (e.g. forests, lakes, mountains, cliffs, waterfalls)

Area Three: ‘the countryside’ (e.g. hills, fields, woods)

Area four: ‘the domestic picturesque’ (e.g. parks, gardens, lanes). (246)

Barry says that through these areas, the readers’ notion move from nature to culture. Therefore the wilderness is pretentious by global warming, that is cultural and gardens relay on sunlight for their augmentation and survival which is considered as a natural energy but neither perception (nature or culture) is thereby invalidated. However the two middle areas to changeable degrees contain hefty elements of both culture and nature. The two selected novels of Barbara Kingsolver cover the areas from two to four. They talk about clinging on nature and mankind association with the aforementioned areas is delineated through their livings.

Identifying the self really means considering the model of living that happens after speculating the unity in ecosystem and that bring changes in self amelioration as well. Kingsolver’s seventh novel *Flight Behavior* was published in 2012 centers the life of Dellarobia Turnbow and her life amidst farm, and family wraps her children, husband Cub Turnbow, Bear Turnbow her father in- law and her mother in-law in Feather Town, Tennessee. Dellarobia, a miserable farm wife who secretly dreams of running away from everything especially about her familial life that she views as her past decision. Her thought involvement indicates the introspection over herself and what she has decided is wrong about the act of stepping out of the residence. She learns the survival of the fittest from the arrival of monarch butterflies.

Dellarobia encounters monarch butterflies at the uphill in her in- law’s property in Feather Town, Tennessee where she plans to go with a man to start a new life from a very tired and bored life of a woman who is in someone’s shell. As the butterflies struggle to survive and continue to reproduce their species, Dellarobia also puts her diligent to deal

with her past decision and consequences with probabilities that she possesses. Her marriage with Cub Turnbow cemented her future with domestic chores and lives as an epitome of a familial woman by accepting all the responsibilities. Later, she realizes the act of leaving everything and walking away is a self destruction after speculating the fantastic sight of the monarch butterflies. Thousands upon thousands of monarch butterflies are hanging from the trees at the top of the high road trail. She believes this is an optimistic sign and heads back home as an amended woman. She informs her husband Cub about the congregation of the monarch butterflies in their farm and also asks her father in-law Bear Turnbow to drop in a visit to uphill to abort the plan of giving up their farm with logging company.

The entire Turnbow family goes up the path and drops jaws by seeing the sight of the bright orange and black insects filling their forest. Due to climatical change they migrated to Tennessee this time. Usually they go to Mexico. Callan Bentley in her articles exclaims that, the butterflies are a potent symbol for the perturbed global ecosystems, at once massive and delicate. Turnbows share this sight at their church that leads a kin astonishment and even the pastor. Bear Turnbow is not convinced about this because his family frantically is in need of monetary so he proceeds with the logging project. Turnbows family charges for tours with people who had come down to see the glimpses of butterflies in their property. Among the visitors there is a scientist named Ovid Byron, also entomologist, ecologist biological communities, wants to study about the monarch butterflies. Ovid says about the migration of butterflies to Dellarobia that:

“Usually, they go to Mexico.” she set down her fork and leaned forward. “Millions of butterflies pile up in this one spot on top of a mountain in Mexico. Always the same one. I mean, why Mexico? What’s so special about that one mountain?” “Good Question,” Ovid replied. “Well, I guess a few of them go to California,” she said. “I’m not sure how that part works. But about, I think, ninety- nine percent of them normally wind up in Mexico.” (160-161)

Ovid meets Dellarobia and tells her usually these butterflies migrate to Mexico but due to severe flooding and destruction of the accommodation they came here to Feather Town. He also states that their migration causes the sabotage in global warming. Meanwhile Dellarobia makes a discovery of her own self when she indulges to know more about the migrated butterflies in her in-law’s farm. Barbara Kingsolver describes the situation where Dellarobia indulges with the assistants of Ovid:

The idea of that mountain dragged down, and a certain world with it, was becoming unthinkable to Dellarobia. Her life was unfolding into something larger by the day, like one of those rectangular gas-station maps that open out to the size of a windshield. She was involved in a way, with those scientists. (216)

Dellarobia and Ovid along with his assistance tent a room for doing research on Monarch butterflies in Turnbow’s property. Meantime of their research they discover the vicissitude significance of socio economic differences. On the flip side, Ovid realizes that Dellarobia is a diligent and astute person even with limited educational surroundings and along with Ovid she gains inquisitiveness to study about the monarch butterflies. Eventually she accumulates interest with Ovid but that stays for very short period when

his wife arrives. Dellarobia constantly broods on to study about the monarch butterflies with the help of Ovid to branch out her own wings in life along with her children. She got admiration towards Ovid because of the respect he showed upon her that she missed from her husband.

Bear Turnbow gives up the logging project due to pastor's advice and they start preserving the monarch butterflies. Climate change visits again Tennessee but luckily butterflies are able to conglomerate their species and continue to create many more. The same notion drifts Dellarobia to embark a new life though there are impediments in her way.

Crutzen and Stoermer introduce the Anthropocene as a way to elucidate the human-caused geological period that has significantly and negatively changed the earth. The second phase of the era of the Anthropocene, known as the "Great Acceleration," begins in the post-World War II period around 1945, when scientists could directly measure the changes in the atmosphere due to carbon emissions. This period is also when industrialization and urbanization massively intensified, creating worldwide ecological devastation. For Crutzen and Stoermer, global greenhouse gas emissions remain the most significant cause of this anthropogenic (or human-caused) epoch, and one that is based in scientific evidence rather than theory. Ecocritics have quickly adopted the term "Anthropocene" as a way to locate literary works concentrated on the environmental crisis, and most notably climate change/global warming, throughout the industrialized modern era. Morton 2013 theorizes the idea of "hyperobjects," a combination of temporal-spatial objects that helps readers realize the phenomenon of climate change, among other environmental problems.

Self introspection by procuring the prototype of living from ecological elements especially in Dellarobia's life is drawn. A mother of two children who sacrifices everything for them and also for sake of the family; leaving all her desires aside and being naught about her identity makes her brood what she is and where she stands. Migration of butterflies removed clouds in her mind and paved way for her to become a resilient from all her hurdles. The very site of monarch butterflies connotes there is life even after the familial and environmental sabotages in terms of taking up all the responsibilities and losing one's own identity.

Kingsolver's fifth novel *Prodigal Summer* deals with the perception of going back to nature and embracing the wilderness. She uses her ideal knowledge of the biological behavior of organism that changed hearts in this novel. *Prodigal Summer* set in rural Virginia. It interlocks the life of three central characters in the route of one summer. Every narrator has one central theme. The first part of the novel revolves around the life of Denna Wolfe titled "Predators" that centers on coyotes, a widely hunted animal species in America. Denna discovers a coyote family in the forest and gains determination to protect them against humans when Eddie Bondo "the hater of coyotes" walks in. This story brings out their animal instincts kick in and this blossoms a summer full of love and passion that brings irritation by ideological differences connected to conservation and hunting of wildlife. The story marks the relationship between the main characters with their movement towards the courtship of predators and it also provides the insight into the life of coyotes and other predators. It briefs in domination of male

over female and illuminates the imbalance of ecosystem when a single organism such as coyotes removed from the food chain. The narrative strands the quintessential side of coyotes existence.

The next story ties up the life of Lusa and her husband Cole Widener in Zebulon Mountain. It is titled as "Moth Love" in which each of them finds ones interest for moth love. Lusa has a passion for farming along with her husband Cole, but it gets obstructed when Cole dies and she exclaims:

I don't know, it's embarrassing. People are watching me. I'm figuring out how to farm by doing all the wrong things. And I'm having this retrospective marriage, starting at the end and moving backward, getting acquainted with Cole through all the different ages he was before I met him. (165)

She has faced obstacles with Cole's sisters. They are unlike Lusa and she gets rejuvenation of herself only with the sound and sight of the Moth. Slowly she finds a place in one of his sister's heart named Jewel, who is living with her children here in Cole's place since her husband is no more. It is an emotional tale tangling the life of loss, the subsequent confusion when anchor of one's life is perturbed and chaos of the world that lead her curve a niche in the hearts and lands of the widener folk.

The "Old Chestnuts" is the third chapter centers on another main character, Garnett. He is an elderly widow living in an isolated home in which he was brought up. He passes his days contemplate over the complexity with his neighbor, Nannie Rawley, causes him. He cultivates some plants in the garden, as well as his beloved chestnut trees. He believes that pesticides are the only way to protect his crops and trees, which is in absolute dissimilarity with Nannie's organic methods. They waste much of Garnett's story backbiting over the relationship between man and nature and how to work in harmony with nature. By the end of Garnett's story, they procured a great deal about one another and have acquired to listen to and pacify with each other. They have also made a reciprocal affection for each other in their old age since the reciprocity is an essential trait for societal bonding. The final chapter is different from all the other chapters. It is from the perspective of the coyote. This coyote travels through the valley and back up the mountain. It hints at the growth of her family and the new families that are arriving.

This novel also portrays the rudiment reciprocity of man to other creations of God such plants, animals and to social animals and also their support for man to live serenely on the earth. Human beings should comprehend the responsibility to product the Mother Nature from all incapacitates. As a practitioner of non organic fertilizer, Garnett Walkner writes to Naanie Rowley about the creation of God in the world and said:

'Be fruitful; and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it!... Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed which is upon the face of the earth, and every tree in which is the fruit of a tree- yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. And to every beast of the earth and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth.' (188)

Garnett assumes that god created all other being in the world for only man's needs and wants. He also adds the other creatures like herb; fruit are for men and men alone. He

does not think about any conjoining nature of the world. He misinterpreted that the creatures do not have life but only man possesses. He often says that living takes life. But later he changes his notion in an optimistic way by deciding nature creates vistas for human beings' buoyancy. These characters, like all creatures, are connected. There are several large acquaintances between these characters. Deanna's father is also the father of Nannie Rawley's daughter. Garnett is the grandfather to the children that Lusa adopts. Both Deanna and Lusa care about the coyotes living on the mountain, as well as the forest behind the Widener's home. There are many other smaller details that fasten one character to another, including personality traits, the nature that surrounds them, and the growth that takes place in their lives over the course of two seasons.

Barbara Kingsolver explores the relationships between humans and the world that they inhabit through the use of three interrelated plot lines. One of these involves a naturalist who lives alone on a mountain, and has an affair with a hunter. Another involves a recent widow struggling with her in-laws, and trying to keep her farm going. The third involves an old man's struggles with his eccentric neighbor.

This paper mainly spotlights intricacies of learning the power of resilience through other creature from God's advent and also explicates how to jell with one's own cosmos is depicted in Kingsolver's novels *Filght Behaviour* and *Prodigal Summer*. Environmental speculation brings changes in self and also amelioration in behavior is identified. Both the novels focus on natural inclination is inevitable in one's life. Though the self identity is important yet reciprocity is crucial to find in people. They also mirror about the compassionate behavior towards nature because many times it imparts unity and being congenial with the other entire livings organism.

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