

Chapter 3

Acculturation and Ecology in Dai's *Stupid Cupid*

When a person wants to adopt a particular culture he undergoes some problems, viz. Adaptation, identity crisis and inferiority complex. The people generally grow a kind of curiosity to merge with another culture to bring out something new. The hybridization of cultures let us know that the cultures are interconnected with each other. Culture is a thing which is based on human communication. As per the definition in the book by Eric B. Shiraev *Cross-Cultural Psychology: Critical Thinking and Contemporary Applications*, culture is “a set of attitudes, behaviours and symbols shared by a large group of people and usually communicated from one generation to the next.” (4) The cultural binaries that are created within are the difference in norms, traditions and linguistic opinions. Culture is always changeable posits the characteristics of fusion and adaptability, and because of these two features, we get to have a different form of culture. The transition or transformation of cultures always happens thereby to make it a continual process. As many critics say culture is a phenomenon which is always in a continuum. This continuity is seen in the gradual process of transition of cultures. The new culture will be a cumulative one having both the traits of the two cultures. All the cultures have some commonalities in postulations. They are always transient and get transformed from time to time. Cultures are always valued for their own ideology and principles. As long as human civilization persists, the culture also will prevail. The people of the community are mainly culturally inclined and had a charm towards their own identity. Cultural identity is the proposition of the community that rebuilds the identical status of the community. Commonly the traits of cultural differences are originally intricate with the idea of identity and identity crisis. On the whole, it can be said

that the cultural drift is for the transformation of cultures, traditions, norms, dogmas and linguistic binaries.

Culture and identity are two aspects which always give concern to the normative way of thinking. In the post-colonial world, people are giving importance to their own culture and cultural identity. They are always in a dilemma that the culture that they possess could be changed with the interaction of various cultures. For this reason, they want to remain aloof from other cultures so that they do not lose their identity. But this matter is only vested upon them as they are responsible for their own transition. The dilemma which is created by cultural binaries had a tremendous impact on the psychology of the natives. Identity plays a major role in the community which by themselves think that they are inferior. This “inferiority” in case of the varied communities provoke towards different kinds of binaries. The enforcement of various communities during the time of clash had this problem of “inferiority”. And as a result, this “inferiority” has been a major barrier in case of identity. The post-colonial era had given many concepts of identity and the crisis has arisen because of it. This problem is often hinted in the theory of Orientalism, the aspect of “the other”, issue of colonizer and so on. The questions of identity and culture prevail in the community thereby to profess the idea of varied binaries of communities. In Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” she says:

“Human identities and subjectivities are shifting and fragmentary. While some critics and historians find that such accounts of subject-formation facilitate our understanding of the possible give-and-take, negotiations and the dynamics of power and resistance of colonial relations, for others such theories of fragmented, unstable identity do not allow us to conceptualise agency, or to define subjects who are the makers of their own history.” (194)

This statement makes it clear that the “subaltern” is the group of people who are oppressed by the people in power. The historians and critics turn out to be the forces of power. The power resists the common ideas in the fictions. The culture and identity are the two main ideas that met with demand of fiction-writing. In the novels of the post-modern and post-colonial period, we get the conception of culture and identity. The clash between culture and identity are the most vital in this era. The hybridity formed by the culture is always seen in the case of various cultural differences. All these ideas surround a different vision of Foucauldian effects.

Migration is the element for the creation of an identity crisis.

As seen above, culture and identity are the two important measures in the case of deciding the factor of trauma and conflict. The migration of the people from the mainland makes people concerned about the problems that they might face in their life. The struggle and hazards that rise because of the migration make one lose their own identity. The identity has all the important features that describe the origin or aboriginality of a community. Identity and ethnicity are the two things that have its own effects. The migration bears the feature of marginalization in it. This is an important feature that makes a person understand the effects of marginalization. Migrations in the metropolitan states show that the scopes are broader in the metropolitan states. And it is because of this that, we find people are more interested in going to the metropolitan cities to have a brighter future. The varied scopes are not always because of opportunities or fortunes; but sometimes it is because of the conflicts and political problems in the states. There are numerous examples in recent times which show the migration of the Highlanders to the metropolitan cities. The Northeasterners who go for studies and employment are always thought to be different from the people of Delhi or other metropolitan cities. The people from Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh and others always face this problem as they look different from the

people of other regions. For this cause, they sometimes face some serious problem of sexual abuse or harassment. In this globalised world, where there is a formation of a solemn and sovereign nation, this idea of differentiation may cause too many ill-effects. Thus, they became “other” in their own nation. They face the problem of being taunted by the local natives of the place. And sometimes they become annoyed and rebellious because of it. Psychologically, it has been put into their brain that North East means violence and brutality. This stereotypical idea makes the metropolitan people think that they are always cruel and rude in their attitude.

All these above factors are responsible for the important aspects of acculturation. In the branch of sociology, it is a major aspect for the study of culture. This phrase “acculturation” was coined by the anthropologists in the late 1930s. The definition of acculturation is quite important as it has a bend towards the relative one of sociology. As defined by David Sam and John Berry in their book, *The Cambridge Handbook of Acculturation Psychology*,

“The meeting of cultures and resulting changes are what collectively has come to be known as acculturation.” (1)

The definition of acculturation is based on the principle of social, psychological and cultural change. In the post-colonial period, acculturation plays a significant role in framing the psychology of the people. In places like the USA and India, we find a blend of diverse cultures. The immigrants from different nations mingle with one form of culture in case of these two nations. The nations might be different but their unity is the same. In the case of acculturation, the cultural and ethnic identity of the minorities also comes at hand. The blending of internal psychology is used in the case of acculturated people. Acculturation has four different parts:

Assimilation, Separation, Marginalization and Integration. All these terms are considered as the pillars of acculturation. These terms are associated with anthropological ideas about cultural change. In the said book, Berry suggested that “the acculturation process proceeds according to the degree to which the individual simultaneously participates in the cultural life of the new society and maintains his or her original cultural identity”. (19) The study of acculturation posit towards many facets of cultural experiences. Assimilation, in the process of acculturation, is a cultural process which happens when an ethnocultural group wish to maintain their interaction with other cultural groups and thereby try to adopt their culture and tradition by losing their own identity. This definition is quite vibrant in the cultural disintegration in the metropolitan cities where the other cultures merge and assimilate in a ‘melting pot’. The second one, separation, is a cultural process of avoiding interaction with other cultures so that they can cling to their own culture and do not lose their identity. The third one is marginalization, which is defined as the cultural idea of maintaining interest in having relations with others often cause exclusion or discrimination. And the final one is integration, where there is an understanding of a kind of group process and is concerned with the individuals living in groups or in the presence of other groups. These are the parts that make the acculturation process.

The characteristics of acculturation could be correlated with many recent writers. Mamang Dai’s fiction *Stupid Cupid* also has this aspect. Dai justifies by writing the novella with the prevailing problems that the people from the North East and other parts of India usually face in the metropolitan cities. In *Stupid Cupid*, she focuses on the discrimination of Northeasterners by the people of Delhi. Dai takes up the recent issues of ethnic conflict, terrorism, migration in search of opportunities, racial discrimination and so on. It also features the template of tagging a Northeastern person with “foreigner” or rather “Chinese”. This work has the embodiment of all

the features of making the people of North East as “other” by the people of Delhi. Centering round the aspects of life, livelihood and opportunities the North East people always wanted brighter scope in order to reveal themselves to others. But many people misconceptualize that North East is a violent and disturbed area. To them, the places of the North East are the most violent-stricken places in India. They had this connotation that apart from the Naxals in Jharkhand, Orissa, West Bengal, the terrorist outfits of North East are equally dangerous. This made them afraid of the place. But in recent years, it is found that there are some people who are trying to explore the place with a positive view. The writer of the novella took a very recent issue and skilfully blended the story into a harmonious one. It is rather a blessing that the people of India can now explore many things in the writings of the Northeastern writers. The novella *Stupid Cupid* revisits the land of Arunachal Pradesh with a modern perspective, where it can be visualized as the most beautiful and exotic location which was not yet discovered by the people of India. This book has all the traits of making the people aware of the fact that the places are not violent any more but rather calm and serene and covered by the heavenly beauty of snow-clad mountain peaks. Therefore, it can be certain that the novella made out the effort to know the people of the North East and the way they are treated in the metropolitan cities.

The story revolves round a character Adna, who is a migrant from Arunachal Pradesh. Dai in *Stupid Cupid* makes a clear statement that the people of North East always face serious problems regarding racism. As the culture of the Northeasterners is sometimes assimilated or separated, we find that they are like acculturated people. The customs, traditions, norms and dogmas are completely different from the people of metropolitan cities. Dai stresses on the effort to bring in an important perspective of cosmopolitan belief, the strife for revealing the identity is full of dilemma in the novella. The characters are continuously in

battle with each other. The battle is not brutal or blood shedding rather it is a battle for revealing their identity. The metropolitan city, like Delhi, has so many problems starting from environmental to social or communal. Dai makes her effort to make us understand the behaviour of people in the city. The factor of “strangeness” in the communities of the North East makes the city-dwellers to think like that. They are always racially discriminated and sometimes treated as “backward” and “inferior”. This sort of misbehaving is seen when Jia and TD came down from flight. They were waiting for a cab and luckily they got one. Then a cab came near her and while she was going to board on, a ‘big, hard-faced woman’ pushed her and sat on the backseat, a young man after her and another man occupied the front seat. Jia was angry and without any further adieu, she jumped next to the man in the backseat and kept her bag near the boy’s feet. The man was angry. Then the taxi driver turned towards them and asked them. Jia said, ‘I was first in line’ (51). The man and the woman wriggled a bit. The taxi driver told her that there is another taxi just behind them. Jia replied they can take the cab. Suddenly the woman shouted angrily: ‘Hey you! Jao! JAO! Go back to your own..... DESH!’ (52) This whole incident reminds us of the attitude of the North Indian people towards the Northeastern people. These lines also show the marginal behaviour to make the Northeasterner as “other”. In the cultural politics of the North Indian people, they had taken for granted that the Northeastern people are away from any cultural background and are also devoid of any customs. They had no sense of ethics as well as manners. This stereotyped view is completely obnoxious. The above lines can be further elaborated by the theory of Homi K. Bhabha in his essay ‘The Other Question’. As he says:

“Racial stereotypical discourse, in its colonial moment, inscribes a form of governmentality that is informed by a productive splitting in its constitution of knowledge and exercise of power. Some of its practices recognise the difference of race, culture, history as elaborated by

stereotypical knowledge, racial theories, administrative colonial experience, and on that basis institutionalised a range of political and cultural ideologies that are prejudicial, discriminatory, vestigial, archaic, ‘mythical’, and, crucially, are recognised as being so. By ‘knowing’ the native population in these terms, discriminatory and authoritarian forms of political control are considered appropriate.” (52)

This statement is meant for the colonial mindset but it is also a stereotypical view that is dominant till date. The sense of stereotypical order has a common insight towards the people of the North East and other parts as well. The dilemma in it is revealing their identity. They are always in a colonial quest in search of themselves. All the characters in the fiction are interested in mixing with people and want to accommodate themselves in the sphere.

The features of migration are seen in the background of the novella. The problem of migration in the metropolitan cities in recent years has aroused many other problems. The metropolitan cities are the places where the people who seemed to be too much civilized behave with the people of, especially, North East, with a different kind of attitude, as if they were not from India. In the metropolitan cities, especially, Delhi, the people from North East had a connotation that they might be bullied or assaulted by some people. Their openness becomes their problem. Dai’s *Stupid Cupid* has a detailed description of problems that aroused because of migration. This is seen in the perception of the people of Itanagar in the novella. It follows as:

“ ‘It is a jungle out there!’ our elders warned us. In Itanagar, where the neighbourhood called it a day by six in the evening, they followed the news about shocking murders and cruelty

of Delhi, which was reported daily. ‘No one will help you there, because no one will know who you are’, they said.” (14)

This perception is there because of the news and media. Such description makes us feel that Delhi is a “bad” place to live in. In the novella, Dai reflects upon the contemporary issues that are still there in Delhi. She, by the name of Delhi, gives an image of sophisticated, urbanised, globalised and mechanical place. Delhi, according to many people is a place of both “darkness and light.” (19) The manner of negligence for the people of North East is fully validated in Tiplut Nongbri’s book *Migration, Identity and Conflict*: “The perception of mainland India towards the Northeasterners and vice versa has long been a contested affair. On the one hand, people from the North East region have felt neglected and discriminated against by the state and mainland population.” (19) The harshness of attitude in the novella is seen with the characters who wanted to acclimatise with the region. Migration is a big problem for the Northeasterners in Delhi. They migrate because of better opportunities but they are not taken by the people as their own countrymen. They behave like “foreigners” to their own land.

The two chief factors in the novella that are vibrantly found are separation and marginalization. These two factors of acculturation are there in the novella. Dai is very conscious of her efforts in the novella. The character, like Adna, wanted a life that is full of love and fame. And for this, he started a hotel by the name of ‘Four Seasons’, where he proposed to give all the facilities to the couples who would come to that place. In acculturation, separation is a term which is used to denote about the migrants who want to mingle with the locals without losing their identity. In the novella, Adna also does the same thing. He is inclined with his culture, but he also tries to mix with the people of Delhi. Dai sometimes recollects the old incidents during

the period of insurgency and also the actions done by the various terrorist groups. In a place, she talks about the political conditions of the North East. The description states:

“A few years ago exciting developments had made us all sit up. The Assam Student’s Union had launched a movement to wrest control of the state’s resources. Assam was rich in oil and tea, and they said it was all being taken away from the people to whom it really belonged. ‘We are fighting for a fair deal’, they cried. We did not know what ramifications would follow, but at the time we were well aware that the ‘Agitation’, as it was called, was inviting a great deal of media attention, and that the Centre was taking notice. When the student leaders travelled to Delhi for talks with the Union government we, as fellow North- Easterners, were filled with a sense of pride.” (13)

These statements imply the kind of approach made by the newspapers and the media about the Northeastern states. These statements also arises the next issue of how the people of the metropolitan cities judge the people of North East. It is seen already in succeeding lines mentioned above: “ ‘Oh, the North-East is a different country altogether’, there was an exodus from our parts to Delhi, as if the revelation of differences had cast a spell on us all, and we were turned into a motley caravan of pilgrims eager to reach the capital.” (13)

The perception of North East is seen in the words like “different country” (13), “exodus” (13), “motley caravan of pilgrims” (13). These words make a clear image of “marginal” in the novella. In the whole novella, Dai wants to give an image of Northeastern people to be the people, who are not considered as citizens of India. For this reason, they are termed as “foreigners” by their own countrymen. Their sense of demeaning them creates a feeling that the Northeastern people

are always subjected and oppressed. This is how in the novella, Dai brings in the images of marginalization.

The novella, however, speaks about multiculturalism that is said to be inherent in the metropolitan cities. Acculturation and multiculturalism are the two dominant factors of globalisation. Migration is a chief factor for the aspect of multiculturalism in the cities. The city dwellers of Delhi highlight their cultural superiority over the other cultures. On this note, multiculturalism becomes a vain effort. The people of Delhi mistakes the Northeastern people as to be “foreigner”, and because of this, they are considered as “other” by them. Tiplut Nongbri’s *Migration, Identity and Conflict* best exemplifies it as:

“Northeasterners have also found themselves caught in the conflicting expectations of the workplace and locality they live in with respect to clothes and fashion. With many of the workplaces switching over to international standards in matters of dress and appearance of their employees to keep up with the demands of the age of globalization, the donning of Western attire by the Northeast female are often construed by the locals as an indication of their loose moral character with little respect to modesty and tradition.” (27)

This impact of globalisation is seen by many people in varied parts of India. The illustration which is given above asserts to the narrowed vision of the locals of Delhi. The blend of tradition and modernity is also seen in the character of Green, who is a girl from Dimapur. Green and her boyfriend Temjen was living in Delhi for a long time. She was a lady who would deal in traditional items of her state. As it is said:

“Everything was there, the red- and- black warrior shawls, the heavy woven cloth of our tribes, shawls for brave hunters and decorative shawls for women in all textures and colours.” (67)

The character like Green is a person who always indulges herself in business. She was an accomplished pianist and her boyfriend Temjen was a musician. They arranged some concerts in Dimapur to raise money for the rehabilitation of drug victims. They always emphasize that: “People think there is nothing more to us beyond the jeans and our “wild East” image. So we are trying to do something.” (68) This kind of perception makes them feel like they are considered as ‘other’ in their own nation. The assimilation of culture may lead to loosing of identity. That is why they try to separate themselves from modern culture. But it is because of the growing modernisation that the people of North East, such as Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland and Meghalaya are always taken into context of adhering to the modernised concepts. This makes the people of Delhi think that they are “loose-character” in their behaviour.

The features of acculturation are properly seen in the novella. It also gives emphasis towards the growing modernisation and how the people have perceived in their day to day life. In the novella, the exposure of modernisation and acculturation is seen vibrantly. Dai is responsible for creating an actual image of Delhi which is “heart-wrenching” to us. The envious eyes and the senses of hatred are seen in the character of Jia. All the characters in the novella focus on the factor of love but there is always an air of suspicion that lingers everywhere in the novella. Dai’s way of interpretation is quite lucid and clear in order to emphasize about the other image of Delhi.

Ecological details in the case of a city are different from a vegetative place. The village eco-system is very different from the city eco-system. Eco-critically the sights and sounds of nature abound with many other traits which are always there in the environment. Many critics throughout the ages had many views over the typical Romantic consciousness. The Romanticism in the Romantic period in England was not much different from Indian Romanticism. The poets

like, Toru Dutt, Chandra Kumar Agarwalla, Sanjayan, P.Kunhiraman Nair and so on are the chief Romantic poets in Indian literature. The Indian poets were inclined towards the Romantic poets of English and French origin. Romanticism in Indian poets was inclined towards appreciation of natural objects. The Romantics are more concerned about the environment and ecology. For them, ecology was a major thing for discussion. The Romantic spirit in case of Indian writers can be seen in their poems. As for example, in Toru Dutt's poems, we can find the essence of mythology along with reality. But in her poems, the Romantic spirit is also found to the fullest. Though the perception becomes different in case of the discussion of environment and ecology yet eco-critical concern is always found in and among the Indian English poets. In Indian literature the use of ecology is divergent and the novels very rarely talk about the ecological significance. The whole idea of ecocriticism rests on many features. Nature, picturesque, pastoral and so on stands as the important things which make the novel more precise. The novels of the post-modern or post-colonial era are embedded with new origins of literature and literary techniques. Apart from the above-mentioned themes, there are some others, such as apocalypse, wilderness etc. The eco-critical view of any novel is based on the principle of ecology or environment in accordance with literature or criticism. So, in all the literatures of the world, the air of Romanticism had an impact on the understanding of ideas of ecocriticism.

The Northeastern women writers are always inclined towards the Romantic ideals. The Romantic ideals in the North East are of many ideas of different origin. The North East writers, such as Mamang Dai, Temsula Ao, Anjum Hasan, Easterine Kire etc. had all the characteristics of ecocritical writers. Saying about the ecocritical ideals the North East writers had always blended nature with literature. In their works, the influence of ecology could be seen, while they write about their landscapes, picturesque, pastoral insights of the region. The

Northeastern women writers of Indian origin are always concerned about the environment and the place where they live in. The Northeastern women writers skilfully portray the varied environmental conditions present in the region. Unlike other Indian writers, they always focus on the problems of ecology and how it brings in the depiction of the place. The writers of the North East had the urge to detail the entire landscape and thereby to give emphasis on the pictorial plots of the region. They always try to justify the open realm of varied ideas of ecocriticism in their works. The writers are not like the English Romantic writers, but they want to retain the glory of romanticism using their own beliefs and ideas. The description of their respective places brings in the glory of the regions. The ideas of the environment always have a turning point in the study of literature. Literature with nature is an indomitable part in the works of North East literary genre. The literary ideals in North East literature are, therefore, full of surprising factors.

The eco-critical phenomena in case of the village are different from the city. The ecocriticism in village or countryside is constituted of nature, sublime, romanticism and varied other factors, whereas, in the city, it is more of the apocalypse, pollution and wilderness. The fictions of North East writers are said to have a naturalistic connotation. In the book *Handbook of Ecocriticism and Cultural Ecology* by Hubert Zapf, it is found that writers like Temsula Ao, Easterine Kire and Mamang Dai always bring in the elements of ecology within the tribal culture. It is stated as:

“Temsula Ao, Easterine Iralu and Mamang Dai among other women writers from the North Eastern states of India explore how the question of identity becomes intertwined with issues of ecology in the case of tribal culture. The wounding of the land, massive deforestation, environmental refugeeism and the socio-ecological production of nature through paradise

tourism and military reterritorialization inform the writings of Sri Lankan women writers like Chandani Lokuge. Jean Arasanayagam, Ameena Hussein and Roma Tearne.” (442)

The element of ecology has been considered as an indomitable part in case of the fictions of Northeastern women writers. It is stated in the book, just like the other Asian women writers the North East Indian women writers bring to the light the usage of tribal culture with ecology. Ecology for the women writers happens to be a basis of life. Nature for the women is like the mother who nourishes the baby. The sense of eco-feminism builds to have a motive that lies along the path of how nature gets blended with the motherly nature of females. Women and nature are two important parts in the literary arena. It is practically a sight for making people understand the pros and cons of nature and philosophy about nature. The women writers usually focus on the ecological feminism that happens to be a distinctive philosophy. The Northeastern women writers were always emphasizing on the aspects of women liberation and equality. Among the women novelists of North East, the feminist philosophy thrives in the background to show up a place. All the women writers of the North East had some impact on the environment and ecology in their works. Writers such as Mamang Dai talk about her place, i.e. Arunachal Pradesh, in her works. The ecological details in her works truly bring in the charm and glory that is attached to the place. It is deeply found in the details of the landscapes and nature and other literary works in the aforesaid writer. Dai always emphasized on her own place, but in *Stupid Cupid* she focused on the city of Delhi. She, in all her fictions, gives a clear idea of the ecological description of the city. Among all the fictions written by Dai, *Stupid Cupid* remains to be very different as it has very less connection with the details about North East. In all her works, the allusion of myths and folklore are always taken as a source. But in *Stupid Cupid*, there is no allusion with myths or folklore. It is based on the contemporary aspects and deals with the life of

the people of North East who use to migrate to the cities in search of job and availing other opportunities. The ecology in the novella, therefore, makes an important place in the justification of the incidents connected with the place.

Dai's works always have an ecological significance whether it is her poems or her fictions. She brings in the detailed description of her place in her works. It is her own beneficial approach, that she always gives her importance towards her own merit of deciding the proficiency about ecological description. The significance of environment and ecology is primarily seen in her fictions. The relevance of ecology becomes a chief motive of discussion in the fictions of Dai. Arunachal Pradesh becomes a place of serenity, sublime and calmness in her fictions. Dai's importance is always led to the factors of ecology and how it metaphorically influences ecocriticism. Her motifs in the novels and fictions rely on the condition of her place and also on how it impacts on the contemporary condition of India. Dai, like, other Northeastern women fiction writers give importance to the aspects of upgrading women in their fictions. But her motive in upgrading women is invested on the basis of an exploration of new and collective ideas of feminist philosophies. Ecology in Dai becomes a major issue of discussion. In *Stupid Cupid*, she describes the place of Delhi and metaphorically uses the brutal and infectious behaviour of the people of Delhi. The novella explores the important feature of pollution and apocalyptic imagery. In the book, *Ecocriticism: The New Critical Idiom* by Greg Garrard, he talks about pollution by conferring the idea from Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring*:

“Silent Spring marshalled an impressive array of scientific evidence to show that this very success constituted a serious threat both to wildlife and to human health, confronting the utopian claims of agricultural scientists on their own ground. Carson's scientific claims have since been

largely confirmed, leading to increased public awareness of pesticide pollution, firmer state regulation and development of less persistent agricultural chemicals.” (2-3)

These are the signs of pollution in the recent decade. In every branch of study “pollution” is taken as ‘environmental crisis’ that is the yardstick of both science and socio-political environment. Dai in her novella clears the idea of pollution which has easily demarcated Delhi from other regions of India. The reference to pollution is seen in the description of Delhi:

“Even in the height of summer I liked the heavy evenings filled with diesel fumes and smoke, and the heat burning our faces the moment we stepped out into the street where the big, dusty trees in full bloom survived the heat and gave shelter to parakeets and squirrels.” (15)

There are a lot of things that are similar and dissimilar to the concept of “pollution”. In the ecological description of Delhi, Dai does not give any emphasis on the “pollution” as told by Carson in her book *Silent Spring*. Dai employs a variegated idea about summers in Delhi with “diesel fumes and smoke”, the hot weather suggesting “heat burning our faces” and “dusty trees” mixes up the conception of how the pollution has become a part of the life of Delhi people. As the concept suggests “pollution” in modern sense is both implicated with environmental destruction and salvation.

This feature is further taken to be of major influence on the effect of the apocalypse. The apocalypse is termed as one which costs the life of the common people. The element of environmental apocalypse surrounds with the idea of many ecologists and eco-critics. In Greg Garrard’s text *Ecocriticism: The New Critical Idiom*, he quotes the lines by Laurence Buell:

“Buell argued that ‘Apocalypse is the single most powerful master metaphor that the contemporary environmental imagination has at its disposal’. (1995: 285)” (101)

The effect of these lines brings in the idea of extensive imagination of apocalypse. Pollution becomes the major issue of the apocalypse. It is found in Carson’s view in *Silent Spring* that:

“This pollution is for the most part irrecoverable; the chain of evil it initiates not only in the world that must support life but in living tissues is for the most part irreversible. In this now universal contamination of the environment, chemicals are the sinister and little-recognized partners of radiation in changing the very nature of the world- the very nature of its life.” (23)

This is the way by which pollution becomes the responsible factor of the apocalypse. It can be assumed that pollution remains thus the apocalypse happens. In the following sentences, chemicals are considered as “sinister” that creates havoc among the people. Carson in her discussion depicts the hazardous impact of chemicals and radiation that could possibly change the entire environment. She is of the view that apocalypse is an important phenomenon which is abounded with the destructive nature of Nature. The fault remains with the humans who always excessively use the resources of nature and does not want to make calculation so that they can sustain it for their future use. Dai sees this impact in the city of Delhi in her novella *Stupid Cupid*. The effect of apocalypse in the novella is there in the city of Delhi and its surroundings. The images of pollution are signs of the apocalypse. Dai in her expression also shows that the bad impact of pollution is the cause for the apocalypse. The climate and weather that is found in Delhi is a responsible factor of the apocalypse. As she says:

“I had a very hazy concept of Lutyen’s city, with its burning summers and hot deserts winds.”

(14)

This description makes it clear that the climate of Delhi is truly unbearable for the people coming from the highlands of Northeastern parts of India. The climate of Delhi is very different from the entire India. The details of “pollution” in the novella make it clear that Delhi has been truly considered as the most polluted city in India. Adna’s feature of sublime after the effect of heat is seen as:

“After a nasty summer of hot, choking winds, it seemed as if the season of rains would soon be upon us.” (69)

All these descriptions clear out the idea of apocalyptic effect in the city of Delhi. Dai is fine in describing the sights and sounds of the city.

The ecological descriptions of the city go to a different angle in the novella. In the novella, *Stupid Cupid* the wilderness is cited with a different idea. The eco-critics like Buell, Mike Davis, and Glen A. Love always discuss on the ecological problems that are found out while tackling with a text. The discussion about nature is used in their writings in order to bring out the common issues of ecocriticism. The eco-critics not only discusses about the environment but also the social- cultural background as well. The deep ecological feature is seen in the academic circles and it inspires many organisations. According to the eco-critics, there are two forms of environment, viz. natural and manmade. In Cheryll Glotfelty’s *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* she talks about wilderness as:

“A wilderness is “an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man..... which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man’s work substantially unnoticeable; [which] has outstanding opportunities for solitude” (Alin 278).” (57)

This concept is solely based on the unhindered relationship between nature and humans. The rustic life is more surrounded by the aspects of nature and ecology. The theories of ecocriticism were propounded by Western critics. The rustic ecology is very different from urban ecology. In Rachel Carson's book *Silent Spring* it is mentioned in 'A Fable of Tomorrow':

“Then a strange blight crept over the area and everything began to change. Some evil spell had settled on the community: mysterious maladies swept the flocks of chicken; the cattle and sheep sickened and died. Everywhere was a shadow of death. The farmers spoke of much illness among their families. In the town, the doctors had become more and more puzzled by new kinds of sickness appearing among their patients. There had been several sudden and unexplained deaths, not only among adults but even among children, who would be stricken suddenly while at play and die within a few hours.” (2)

The impact of nature is seen in this paragraph. The wilderness is not only seen in the case of rural areas but also in urban areas. There is always an air of serenity and solemnness; all of a sudden and there is havoc and death. “Why?” and “How?” these questions are answered in the same story in the following lines:

“No witchcraft, no enemy action had silenced the rebirth of new life in this stricken world. The people had done it themselves.” (3)

It is a statement by the author that nature does not want to harm human beings, but it is the human beings which harm themselves.

The urban ecology as portrayed by Dai in her *Stupid Cupid* is seen in the city of Delhi. There is a deeper insight into the novella. The relationship between the cultural and environmental world is thoroughly discussed. The urban ecology is always different from rural

ecology. The vast countryside of every country is supposed to be different from the other. According to many critics, the aesthetics of ecology is always found in its picturesque, landscape and nature. The dimension of ecology is being discussed by certain symbols of nature. Wilderness, as suggested by Greg Garrard in *Ecocriticism: The New Critical Idiom*, is:

“A construction mobilised to protect particular habitats and species and is seen as a place for the reinvigorating of those tired of the moral and material pollution of the city. Wilderness has an almost sacramental value: it holds out the promise of a renewed, authentic relation of humanity and the earth, a post- Christian covenant, found in a space of purity, founded in an attitude of reverence and humility. The wilderness question is also central to ecocriticism’s challenge to the status quo of literary and cultural studies, in so far as it rejects the exclusively social concerns of the traditional humanities.” (66)

The idea of wilderness is supposed to be a vital element in the case of nature. The urban ecology has a different sort of wilderness that is chiefly found in the case of modern city life. Dai is of the opinion that in the novella *Stupid Cupid*, she clarifies the idea of wilderness with a different epoch. The entire machinery of the environment is due to its approach towards the very city of Delhi. The story has a transition from the highlands of Itanagar to the city of Delhi. The change in climate reveals the change in the wilderness. The instance in which it is known that the apartments, traffic are the part and parcel of the city is the source of different sort of wilderness. The impact of rapidity is seen everywhere throughout the place. The wilderness of the city is seen in descriptions like, “driving through the streets of the city and entering the outskirts as the sun was setting.” (326), it reveals both the beauty and hastiness of city life. The distinction between the wilderness of the countryside and the city is based on its difference in landscapes. Dai’s outlook over the vision of two places both Arunachal Pradesh and Delhi becomes a major

issue in the novella. The wilderness in the city is away from the beautiful scenic beauty of the mountains, valleys, rivers and so on. Dai's characters Dayud and Mareb both belong to the hilly region that is "around the narrow corridor called the 'chicken neck' which links the Northeastern states to the rest of the country." (61) The view of Delhi is different as it bears smoke, industrial wastes and dust. Dai's wilderness is there in the highlands of Itanagar and other Northeastern states. It is fully justifiable that the narrator's look over ecology is a portrayal of the distinction that is seen vividly in case of the city of Delhi. So, it can be dealt with great precision that wilderness in the hilly region is quite different from that of city life.

Dai in her novella clarifies both the aspects of ecology and acculturation. Both acculturation and ecology are two most important features in the novella. The novella fully emphasizes on the aspect of acculturation and ecology. The impact of acculturation in the novella is to make a serious notion towards the view of migration. Throughout the story, we find the features of migration. The story encircles around the cultures, dogmas and rituals that are followed by the tribal people of Arunachal Pradesh. Manners and mannerisms are quite different from the other parts of India. The sense of modernity in the case of Delhi people is that they are the soul of every culture and think about the other people as inferior to their culture. They assume that they are the people of their place and the people who had migrated from North East are the intruders in their place. The Northeasterners even if, they try to adopt some of the modern cultures but they are always mistaken by the locals and termed as to be "loose-character". All these aspects of acculturation bring in a sense of adulterated ideas of the North Indian people about the Northeastern people. It is all because they belong to different lands and they are from different habitat and ecology. They do not consider these lands to be part of India and assume them as "foreigners". The differences in landscapes make it possible to think about

the terrain and ecology of the city life and that of the hilly region. However, it can be taken into account that both ecology and acculturation play a significant role in the novella.

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