

CURRENTIA LITERARIA

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY PERSPECTIVES ON
ENGLISH LITERATURE

DR RAJENDRA KUMAR DASH, ET AL.

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***Gendered Nature: An Ecofeministic Reading of Alice Oswald's
'Dunt: A Poem For A Dried Up River'***

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Introduction

Nature is what we know—
Yet have no art to say—
So impotent Our Wisdom is
To her Simplicity.

(Emily Dickinson's "Nature is what we see", Lines-9-12)

The birth of religions, the evolution of belief systems and the conception of myths and legends trace the stereotypical representations of gender. The question of labelling and portrayals could be traced to the beginnings of civilization when man co-existed with the elements of Nature, millions of years ago. While there is no concrete answer as to why the Planet Earth was given feminine connotations, it is perhaps the nurturing and life-giving nature of female gender which is linked to Planet Earth which nourishes all living creatures. The term 'Ecofeminism', coined by a French feminist, Françoise d'Eaubonne in 1974, examines the connections between women and nature, and uses the basic feminist tenets of equality between genders, a revaluing of non-patriarchal or nonlinear structures, and a view of the world that respects organic processes, holistic connections, and the merits of intuition and collaboration. Eco-feminism embraces commitment to the environment and an awareness of the associations made between women and nature, analyzing the effect of gender categories.

Alice Oswald, the British poet and recipient of T.S. Eliot Prize (2002), Griffith Poetry Prize (2017) and Eric Gregory Award (1994), astoundingly dissects the surreal world of Nature with similes, metaphors, symbols and images. Poetry evolves as powerful articulations in her poem 'Dunt: A Poem For A Dried Up River' (Oswald, 2016). This research article explores how Alice Oswald constructs the prism of gender and ecology as a self-conscious, affective, and continual experience, which creates and defines its own passage in relation to itself, and finds coherence in the scattered nature of its milieu.

Gendered Nature: The Aural Echoes

Nature is attributed with qualities that pertain to female gender- accommodating, nurturing, loving, caring, tenderness protecting and life-giving. A recurring pattern in the cultures of the world is the

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