
An Eco Critical Perspective Of Barbara King Solver's Flight Behavior

Eco criticism is the study of literature and the environment from an interdisciplinary point of view, where literature scholars analyze texts that illustrate environmental concerns and examine the various ways literature treats the subject of nature. It gives human beings a better understanding of nature. Barbara Kingsolver is an American novelist, essayist and poet. She is a writer with the gift for telling engrossing stories and for creating interesting and lively characters. Raised in rural Kentucky, many of her books revolve around themes of rural life, nature, social justice and bio diversity. Flight Behavior her esteemed novel is a clear cut example of her extreme concern for the natural world.

In Flight Behavior Kingsolver creates a mesmerizing comparison between the life trajectory of Dellarobia Turnbow, an unhappy house wife on the verge of cheating, and the migration of the Monarch butterfly, a hypnotic yet earth-altering effect of climactic change. Her ability to put the silent, breathtakingly beautiful butterflies, at the center of this calamitous and noisy debate is exceptionally brilliant. In this story, the survival techniques of Monarch butterflies and that of a young woman Dellarobia are inextricably intertwined and analogous. The monarchs made a typical flight due to floods and landslides which led to the falling of trees everywhere in their usual roosting place in Mexico. Consequently they migrated to Feather town to overwinter. Key words: Eco criticism, climate change, migration, global warming, Cli-fi fiction.

In the twenty first century, climate change has emerged as a dominant theme in literature and, correspondingly in literary studies. Its popularity in fiction has given rise to the term Cli – fi, or climate change fiction and speculation that this constitutes a distinctive literary genre. Many flourishing authors of literary fiction, such as Margaret Atwood, Ian Mc Ewan, Amitav Ghosh, Barbara Kingsolver, Lydia Millet, David Mitchell, Nathaniel Rich, Kim Stanley Robinson, Leslie Marmon Silko, Marcel Theroux..., have contributed to this new genre's efforts to imagine the causes, effects, and feeling of global warming.

In Flight Behavior drawing both on her Appalachian roots and her back ground in biology, Kingsolver delivers a passionate novel on the effects of global warming. The novel is set in the Appalachian Tennessee sheep farm, which is surrounded by the rural conservative farmers. These are the people she says are mostly affected by climate change, and strikingly they are least prepared to understand and believe in climate change and its causes. The major issue in the novel is the ignorance of climate change and the eco critical vision. Blindness to environmental change, referred to as "looking without seeing" (FB 52). Of course it's very hard

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for one to believe in things one does not see. One does not see the melting sea ice, the depletion of Ozone layer, the increase of carbon in the atmosphere.

Therefore it's hard for one to believe that the world under ones feet could ever be different than how it's always been. The human animals have a fundamental trust in certain kinds of continuity. It's hard to convince oneself that climate change due to globalization is an abstract future, rather than a threat and reality. Barbara Kingsolver's *Flight Behaviour* is a successful realist example of Cli-fi that confronts climate change directly. Kingsolver's extreme concern and her appreciation for the natural world is quiet apparent in her novels. *Flight Behaviour* visualizes one such spectacle at the arrival of Monarch butterflies in the rural Tennessee as "unearthly beauty...a vision of glory...a valley of lights...an ethereal wind, (FB 21).

"She used butterflies here not only for symbolic beauty, for to convey a strong message of climate change due to global warming. *Flight Behavior* investigates the ecological themes and highlights the possible effects of global warming on the Monarch butterflies. Butterflies are of course the central symbol in the novel. Monarch butterflies belong to "Danaus family" (FB 165). Mr. Monarch is the only one, clever enough to seek his fortune in a cold place, while all his relatives are tropical butte flies (FB 165). These are the only insects capable of flying great distances and even over oceans (FB 160). The life span of an individual Monarch butterflies is an average six weeks, but they pass on their genes to descendants, who complete the journey northwards (FB 200).

Flight Behaviour celebrates the beauty of the Monarch species, and expresses admiration for the extraordinary intricacy and sophistication of the instincts which enable it to migrate annually over thousands of miles between Mexico and Canada. Their annual trip to Mexico seems to weed out the poisoned milkweeds their sole larval food, in order to keep the population healthy(FB 481). The Monarchs which usually fly to Mexico, have come to Feather town to over winter due to landslides and floods which caused the destruction of trees and houses and a massive climate change.

The arrival of the Monarch butterflies meant different things to different people according to their own interests. To Dellarobia it was a warning to turn away from her sinful life and to begin a new life, a symbol of resurrection. Whereas to some, they are the objects of annoyance. To Bear and Hester Turnbow, Dellarobia's in-laws, the butterflies are means to attract tourists and nature lovers through which they can gather money by introducing an entrance fee at their farm gate to see the Monarchs in order to pay off their debts. To the villagers they were a sign or rather a miracle from God.

To media people like Tina Ultner, the butterflies meant current and sensational talk of the town with which they can promote their channel and encompass their advertisements. Kingsolver

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stresses on the lack of seriousness in conserving the nature in Mr. Bear Town. He uncontrollably aims and destroys the trees. For he regards the forest as “just trees” and not “treasure” to be preserved, so that it brings a good rain fall for the better cultivation.

Apart from that, he had also planned to wipe out the newly arrived visitors (the Monarchs) that stand in between the logging plan using pesticides (DDT). The gravity of climate change is terrible. Kingsolver presents to her readers the glimpse of the death-defying disaster that climate change can cause to people by telling the story of the family of Josefina. Josefina is the only child of her parents. They are the Mexicans. Her father was a tourist guide says Josefina. “He takes the people on horses in the forest to see the Monarchs’...and my mother makes tamales for the lot of people” (FB 137).

That is how her family made their living, from working with the butterflies, and the people coming to see them. Josefina’s family migrated to Feather town in quest for survival because of dangerous mudslides and catastrophic flooding on the Mexican mountain town of Anganguero. Many people died, thousands lost their homes and livelihood. On hearing that the Monarchs have arrived at Feather town, they come to see the Monarchs. The seriousness of the climate change is explained through the tiny lips of Josefina to Dellarobia. “Everything is gone! ”the girl cried, in obvious distress. “The water was coming up and the mud was coming on everything...” (FB 139), “everything was gone. ” “The houses. The school. The peoples. ” “Every thing. ” The mountain. And the monarcas also. ”As a renowned biologist herself Kingsolver presents Ovid Byron, a scientist who comes to the town to find out about the Miracle, (Monarch butterflies) as her mouth piece to speak about Global warming.

King solver leaves no stone unturned in revealing the blindness of the Appalachians towards the dangers of (manmade global warming) climate change. The root cause of climate change is the excessive release of carbon in to the atmosphere. The carbon is released through greenhouse gasses, all the coal that has ever been mined, that’s carbon, all the oil wells carbon again!(FB 506). Kingsolver’s prime concern for nature and people is expressed in this novel as she gives the possible remedies for saving the nature and human beings from global warming. She does it through a dialogue between Ovid Byron and Dellarobia.

Ovid gives Dellarobia the possible remedies for protecting and conserving mother earth from destruction,saying “use less fossil fuel”. “Carry your own cutlery, use no plastic utensils”. ” Carry your own Nalgene bottle instead of buying bottled water”. “Try to reduce the intake of red meat”(FB 452). “Turn your monitor off when not in use”. Switch your light bulbs to CFLs”. “Set your thermostat two degrees cooler in winter and higher in summer” (FB 453). Buy a low emission vehicle..., at the end he comments “well there’s only one planet! We all have to share”(FB 454). Flight Behavior is a poignant novel by Barbara Kingsolver, whose message about climate change is timely, true and cannot be ignored.

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She is a founding author of the genre Climate change fiction. Her works often focus on biodiversity and the interaction between humans and their environments. *Flight Behaviour* voices the need for a consciousness and the preservation of natural world. She has explicitly explained about the hazardous effects of climate change through the episode of Josephina's family. She also spoke of the causes and the remedies for climate change through the entomologist Mr. Ovid Byron. She gives the novel an open ended conclusion through which she invites everyone to think and decide for oneself whether to face the difficulties that come on one's way or to make a flight. 'By the end of *Flight Behaviour*, it's clear that Kingsolver's passionate voice and her ability to portray the fragility of the natural world, and why one should care about it, are as strong as ever'(San Francisco Chronicle).

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