

Artistic Perception of Nature and the Female Authorship

Anuruddhika Kumari Kularathna, S. B.¹

It is intended in this paper to examine how women writers have perceived nature and how they recreate it through the literary mediums of poetry and novels. The major emphasis is on selected women writers of Sri Lanka and parallels will be drawn with their counterparts representing the South Asian region.

In the early period of the Island's social history Sinhala women were elevated to a higher position by the liberating influence of Buddhism. The literature, especially exegetical literary tradition supplies dependable and inestimable data in support of the unique position enjoyed by Sinhala women. It also offers a unique opportunity for the literary critic as well as the connoisseur of poetry to gather useful information about the aesthetic experiences of the women who apparently live in a great mutual coexistence with the nature. Their creative expression is clearly marked in episodes included in Attakathas which supply elaborate details about monks who after hearing the damsel's recitals were able to purify themselves and consequently plucked the fruit of the noble eightfold path. Eight poetesses have disclosed their identity on the mirror wall at Sigiriya. By the time engraving graffiti on the mirror wall at the Sigiriya became popular in the post Kasyapa period (8-10th century) many a Sinhala' women was competent enough to express their personal acceptances and at time their shrewd perception of the nature clearly and strongly in the poetic form. Vathsayana in his erotic opus magnum *Kama sutra* highlights the importance of learning poetry even by the ladies to inflame the strong emotions in the minds of their lovers. Therefore, it is logical to accept that the poetry was considered as an art of importance in early South Asian macro culture. What is unique in these early Sinhala women's poetic expression which is earthy in tone is, that a parallel can be drawn with their early predecessors, the Buddhist nuns, who were the authoresses of the lyrical. Outbursts are commonly known as the 'Theri Gathas'. An extension of this tradition can be observed in Gajaman Nona's poetic creations which represent the colonial times and this zeal is precisely apparent in the works

of modern poetesses, for example Monika Ruwanpathirana. This convinced the vital point that human cultures regardless of the time and space they represent are inseparably linked to the natural world and that connection should be understood at various levels of complexity and literary apprehension.

When analyzing the Sinhala women novelists' descriptive narrations on nature, it is apparent that a unique feminine sensitivity has conditioned their penmanship. It is proposed in this study to undertake a research in to the evolution of the literary tradition of Sinhala women writers as poets and novelists with regard to the aspect of their unique relationship with the environment. The methodology of the study was primarily done by analyzing the relevant literary texts. As a conclusion it is tempting to interpret that when compared with their male counterparts uniqueness in penmanship is apparent in the writing styles adopted by women.

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KEYWORDS

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¹Department of Sinhala, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka.
anurudhi@yahoo.com