

# Mildred D. Taylor's Song of the Tree: Role of Women in Protection of Nature

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## Abstract

*Equal to man, every woman plays an important role in maintaining natural resources management and they have the respective knowledge and experience gained through close working with environment. Even in this present condition still some writers in their work concentrate on Nature and its importance. African American Literature, the body of the literature that produced in the United States by writers of African descent, highly concentrates on slavery before the American Civil War. Their oral culture is rich in poetry that includes spirituals, gospel, music, blues, and rap. Mildred D. Taylor is an author of nine novels including *The Road to Memphis* and most of her works known for social issues, mainly the problem faces by African American society. *Song of the Trees* originally published on 1975 is her first highly acclaimed series of books about the Logan family. The Novella is all about Racism, ruling the place and how the Hunger plays a vital role in the place. This paper highly shows that even in this pathetic condition how the female characters like Caroline, Mary, and Cassie struggle to protect nature and their environment from Mr. Anderson.*

**Keywords: Nature, Women, Struggle, and Protection.**

What are all the things needed for human to survive in this universe is provided by natural world around us like food, water, materials for shelter, medicines and even a nature cycle refers climate and nutrients. Human may benefit from nature in different ways. Healthy ecosystems clean our water, it purifies our air, maintain our soil more than all regulates the climate, and provide us with food. "Emerson says that nature is beautiful because it is alive, moving, and reproductive. Nature we observe growth and development in living things, contrasted with the static or deteriorating state of the vast majority of that which is man-made" (Popejoy).

Most of the place in world, women are responsible for proper farm work and related domestic food productions. Women are expanding their involvements in all agricultural works and bring out a perfect outcome in the production results. Mainly in African tribes most of

the works that are connected with agriculture are undergone by women. Men generally own the land even though women are responsible for most of the agricultural works. It shows that women's were controlling upon the land.

Mildred D. Taylor is an author of nine novels including *The Road to Memphis* and most of her works known for social issues, mainly the problem faced by African American society. Taylor has written every book about Logan family that has earned some sort of national recognition. She joined the BSA (Black Student Alliance) during a period of Black Power and due to her involvement she studied black culture, black history, and black politics. For the literary piece, *Song of the Tree* (1975) she won a contest that was sponsored by the Council on Interracial Book for Children.

*Song of the Trees* originally published on 1975, it was her first highly acclaimed series of books about the Logan family. The Novella is all about Racism, ruling the place and how the Hunger plays a vital role in the place. The main idea of this work *Song of the Trees* is that "In difficult times, you must protect what is yours." The entire family tries to protect and save the land which was about to be destroyed by the white man Mr. Anderson.

This paper reveals how women characters in *Song of the Trees* involve themselves in protecting the nature. The character like Caroline, Mary, Cassie, a black family and they own the land which was surrounded by high natural resources. Cassie is a little girl; she wakes up in every morning opens the window and visualize the real beauty of nature. "I opened the window and looked outside. The earth was draped in a cloak of gray mist as the sun chased the night away. The cotton stalks, which in another hour would glisten greenly towards the sun, were gray" (1). Even as a small girl she describing the sun rise in a beautiful way it shows that how much she combines with nature. The sun at the early morning it chasing the night away from the world, it shows that the sun doesn't even risen completely. This small girl needs to be wake up early in the morning before the sun rises and do all the works given by her mother Mary.

In this novel she is explaining about the nature of the forest that how it will be in the early morning before the sun rises. "Only the trees of the forest were not gray. They stood dark, across the dusty road, still holding the night. A soft breeze stirred, and their voice whispered down to me in a song of morning greeting" (1). In the forest even after the sun rises it won't be that much brighter and still remains dark for sometimes. She entering into the forest and feel the soft breeze, it is something like a song as a morning greeting to her. Every day in the morning she enjoys the pleasure of the nature.

There are some problems arising in between the novel. Mr. Anderson, a white man comes to take their land for thirty five dollars but nobody in the family is willing to sell the land especially Cassie, because she loves to spent her most of the time with nature. "Good morning, Mr. Trees, I shouted. They answered me with a soft, swooshing sound (03)." The ways she respecting the nature and taking care of it is shown by her words. She loves nature and the trees in the forest are all like her own friends and enjoying its companion.

In every morning along with her siblings she goes around the forest for collecting the fruits for her family members. They all can only eat what the forest is giving to them regularly like berries, nuts, and etc. The family is in a great poverty state at one point of time Mary scolding her son Christopher-John for waking up in the middle of the night and eating all of the cornbread. There is no remaining bread for the family members to eat at the morning. This is a great pathetic situation of the family.

In their routine life, they all completely involves in nature. Even the children of the family as per the order of the mother, should lead the cows and go around the forest in every morning. Even in the difficult periods they never move out from their routine work with nature.

After breakfast when the sun was streaking red across the sky, my brothers and I ambled into the coolness of the forest leading our three cows and their calves down the narrow cow path to the pond. The morning was already muggy, but the trees closed out the heat as their leaves waved restlessly, high above our head(3).

After the land is taken up by the white man, he cuts down all the trees in their forest and it is witnessed by Cassie and her mother Mary. They both feel very sad and Cassie cries out in the place for their land's situation. Cassie's grandmother Caroline was too old and she can't do anything even at one point of time felt very guilty because she the one who sold the land to the white man but her act is all based on the consideration of her family's poverty.

At end of the novel Cassie's father David return from his work place to save the forest from Anderson. As per his family's wish he protects the land but all the trees are cuts down, here Cassie looking the trees to see if they would sing some more for her but they all remains silent. As a symbol of response even the leaves are not moving. "Dear, dear old trees, I heard him call softly, will you ever sing again? I waited. But the trees gave no answer" (11). It all shows the strong bond between women and the nature and also how the women are trying to protect nature.

### **Work Cited**

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