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Representation of Bioregionalism and Eco-consciousness in Thejaswi's *Jugari Cross*

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Abstract:

Bioregionalism is a novel way of thinking about location and the globe from an ecological standpoint. A bioregion is literally and etymologically a "life-place"—a distinct area having geographical, climatic, hydrological, and biological characteristics capable of supporting distinct human groups and identifiable by natural (rather than governmental) borders. The bioregional study of Indian English literature will aid in developing a long-term perspective on the place and illustrate how a greater understanding of a region's natural and cultural history may influence a community's future.

This paper examines the bioregionalism in Poornachandra Tejaswi's novel *Jugari Cross's* with considerable detail, along with how it contributes to the community's increased ecological awareness. The Western Ghats are fundamentally a bioregion, and the story concentrates on the biotic life there. Tejaswi sees the Western Ghats bioregion as a space defined by the natural world and a realm of awareness. With its declining population of endangered species of flora and fauna and its abundance of natural minerals for human enjoyment, the Western Ghats represent a significant environmental catastrophe. *Jugari Cross* is a compelling argument favouring protecting our distinctive bioregions and restoring the Western Ghats.

Keywords: Bioregion, Bioregionalism, Eco-consciousness, Living-in-Place, Reinhabitation.

According to the concept of "Bioregionalism," political, social, and economic structures based on naturally occurring regions known as "Bioregions," which are comparable to "eco-regions," are more equitable and sustainable. Watershed borders, soil and topography characteristics, and other physical and environmental aspects define bioregions. Bioregionalism is also a natural phenomenon which promotes local communities, knowledge, and solutions. The term "bioregionalism" first appeared in the western US counterculture in the middle of the 1970s. It is coined by Allen Van Newkirk; the founder of the institute for Bioregional Research in 1975 and advocated by the writers David Hacke and Kirkpatrick Sale. It started as a social critique of ecologically unsustainable lifestyles. It transformed into an alternative way of life that prioritizes community involvement, local resource ownership, and a significant amount of self-determination. It seeks to respect the genius loci of locations and areas to promote harmony between human populations and environment (Parsons, 1985). It attempts to stop the escalating speed and declining quality of life.

K.P Poornachandra Tejaswi is among the prominent writers of the Progressive Literary Movement in Kannada. His contributions are *Jugari Cross*, *Cavalho*, *The Stories of My Environment*, *The Inscrutable Mystery*, *Maya Loka* and many others includes short stories, and translations. His literary contribution confirmed him many literary awards like Indian Literary Academy Award, Karnataka State Literary Award, Pampa Award, Rajyotsava Award and prove his academic excellence in Kannada literature. Many of his short stories and fictions have been translated into English and other Indian and foreign languages.

Tejaswi in Kannada is a significant writer for his environmental writings. He concerns for environmental issues than any other contemporaries through his writing. His works create an awareness of the environmental issues straight or circuitously and educate about flora and fauna of the Western Ghats. He hails from Modigere, a base village of the Western Ghats from Chikkamangaluru district of Karnataka. Many of his fictional settings are from the same region. *Jugari Cross* is one of such fictional villages from the Western Ghats. It is a thrilling story reveals the dark faces hidden behind the green patches of Western Ghats. This paper discusses how the issues of bioregionalism, deforestation, corruption, gangsters and professes the adverse affect of the same. These Ghats expand along the western part of South India as a protective shield with rich minerals and vegetation. Hence, it has become a golden bowl for the politicians.

Jugari Cross is an action of twenty-four hours brilliantly interconnects the bioregional elements with the local dwellers and the foreigners who came to rule and ruin the region. Suresh, the protagonist, starts his journey symbolically early in the morning from his remote village and, boarded the bus at Jugari Cross ends his journey the next day when he returns to his native after a long struggle. It symbolically represents the struggle between the natives who adores and nurtures the wilderness and the foreigners' lifestyle of city. The narrator artistically waves the story in a way to attach the sub story of related to places, persons and incidents happen there and eventually interconnect them to the natives and the region exploited for human greed. Eventually he persuades the readers that how politics of frustrated city-life destroys the peace and tranquility of the natives along the Western Ghats.

The protagonist Suresh originated from Malaysia. His parents are Indian originated settled in Malaysia and had plan to establish a rubber estate and a factory there, but unfortunately they had to return to India when localities protests against non-residential corporate expansions. Then Suresh with his parents returns to Bangaluru after selling their estates in Malaysia. Instead of expanding his parents business Suresh chooses literature and settled at Jugari Cross to test his fate with the estate of cardamom. Despite of having post graduation he fascinated towards the nature because of his crazy ideas. Tejaswi describes the history of local people besides the narration of the story and how the mafia engulfs their life gradually. Suresh continues his curious searching for his craze in the densely woodland, to reveal the truth behind the mysteries, incidents and places of the woodland. His thirst to know the history of river Canoe and classical background of it thrills and enlighten the readers about the bioregion of the Western Ghats.

Bioregionalism deals with the homely attachment of the land and natural system. "A bioregion refers both to geographical terrain and a terrain of consciousness- to a place and the ideas that have developed about how to live in that place." (Berg 1978) Suresh had a life of great satisfaction at Jugari Cross and attachment with the village. He settles at Jugari Cross despite of having other opportunities in his career and he finds peace and tranquility here. Tejaswi describes many such stories of struggling life along the settlements of Western Ghats like the stories from Basketry Grove, God's Town Devarapura, and life of Devi. Basketry Grove is called 'Wicker Smiths Grove'. The people of this village solely depend on Bamboo grass, a crop of sixty years. They prepare various articles using fine bamboo baskets, toys, decorations, pots for coffee plantations. Only a few families are left at the village after the introduction of plastic and the demand for bamboo made articles fall drastically. Many like

Devi's husband, mad Ram, and Sid migrate to city in search of employment, but unfortunately become victims on the hands of gangsters and return to their natives eventually. Therefore many families want to stay at the village and strive hard to survive than to migrate. She (Devi) had realized that life in a town is no better than the life she has been living then at Basketry Grove. (41). Life mainly during drying bamboo grass is terrific for natives. The natural circle of bamboo life had begun to loom. The bamboo flowers bloom only in sixty years and turn into paddy to produce seed. The bamboo rice is used for feeding and cultivation.

The story of Devi can also be analyzed with the lenses of bioregionalism. Her husband leaves her with a small daughter to venture into a quick money-making business, and turns to the city life where he becomes the victim in the hands of the drugs mafia, then absconds for an extended period. It is believed that he is killed by wild animals in the forest or by mafia. Devi strongly believed on the natural resources and stays there despite of many difficulties. Her husband returned eventually after a long gap, till then she led a life with her daughter by selling flowers find in the forest. The story of Devarapura is furthermore equally interesting. It is called the God's Town; many came there with a specific aims but could not continue and leave. Contrary the natives of the town stay there. Its nexus with underworld mafia bring the opportunity to go Mumbai. However the love of native land attracts them. All the sub-plots and incidents of the story signify the fascination towards villages along the Western Ghats though they are natives or outsiders.

The issue of geopolitical also focuses that how Jugari Cross, Devarapura and the entire provenience are noted as the hub for drugs, marijuana, ganja, opium and, rubies and diamonds. Eventually it is recognized on the drug trafficking maps of the United Nation. (30). The calls from New York, London, and New Delhi frequently made it super Jugari (Gambler's Den). The gambling in the trade of cardamom extended its boundaries beyond the imagination. Human greed for wealth plays political games to rein the region by exploiting the wilderness and natural resources hidden in the region.

Fine and artistic narrative skill of Tejaswi influences the readers to appreciate and adore the beauty of the village life along the Western Ghats. His fictional topography resembles the actual locations of the towns and cities to feel the readers a real sense of the region. It is hard to believe them that these are fictional settings and deserve to visit there

once in their life. This artistic description fulfills the author's aim to create awareness among the people about wild-life and their conservation along the Western Ghats.

The main focus of bioregionalism is on the significance of location in the natural world. Additionally, this idea emphasizes relationships that occur on the land. Tejaswi describes the scene at Jugari Cross when a girl with basketful of garlands made of wildflowers appears to sell on the deserted road near Jugari cross. "The sun's rays were frightening the rare winter clouds to sneak through them." (44). His description of the rivers and streams flow in the region, mysterious politics on their, feel the readers that he belongs to same region and make enthusiastic to know more about the region's realities. "Hundreds of tributary streams and creeks that flow down the steep densely wooded magnificent inexplicable Ghats were the source for Canoe River; a river that attracts the explorers by its rough terrain surge and the adventurous challenges offered." (81). Tejaswi's explicit description for the tribes, the region's business, treasures hidden in the woodland and every corner of the region with animals and vegetation attract readers to keep his/her interest till the end of the novel. He presents the combination of curiosity for flora and fauna with thrilling stories of suspense win the hearts of youth readers.

The novel encourages eco-consciousness among the readers through the characters and incidents that happen around the Western Ghats. He explores the richness of the region which spreads four states of South India. He lights on the dark shadows of politics on the region. The great picturesque rakes popping out of the river looked like a bunch of elephants bathing in the river. The river banks were shaded dark by the dense shade from the trees leaning towards the river along its shore. A Bioregional viewpoint, contact with nature is crucial to the continuation of life. In this work, Suresh undergoes a change that serves as a case study about the significance of interaction. It has the power to alter how people view nature. As a man of eco-conscious He disapproves the modern lifestyles and wonder of nature and its inhabitants. The author vividly captures his sentiments of horror as he describes his encounters with nature and the events surrounding Jugari Cross. In *Bioregional possibilities in Vermont*, Christopher McGrory Klyza says that, "One of the key reasons- if not the key reason-for moving in a bioregional direction is to improve the interactions between humans and nature, to strive for a place in which natural and human communities are sustainable." (Mc Ginnis 1999).

One of the significant elements of bioregionalism is rehabilitation, where the characters become native by knowing the region's habitats. Berg and Dasmann describe it as understanding the specific ecological interaction inside and around a location that can help you become native to it. "Just as bioregions are more than purely physiographical entities, reinhabitation, one of bioregionalism's core concepts, has always been about more than planting trees and building sustainable homes from recycled materials in degraded and abandoned places." (Lynch et al. 2012) The protagonist Suresh, Sid, and Mad Ram are the good examples for bioregional characters that are very curious about the every part of the jungle and know much about it and the wilderness. They are aware of the politics and corruption growing in the region and victims of it. The remarkable element is that they move forward either honestly or circuitously against these acts in order to protect the natural system of the region. Their worried for the play of anti-natural acts in the region proves their serious concern of the native land. Tejaswi brought the attention of readers towards the mismanagements of natural sources and corruption in the region by the politicians and officials. It discourses the officials' loot the poor farmers at the check posts and for the posting at their selective place they had to pay a massive bribe to the officials.

Bioregionalism is an unavoidable way of life in a world that strives to achieve sustainability along all life's pathways. The questions about eco-friendly ideas are answered by the bioregionalism concept. Today's society is characterized by a sophisticated way of living and a wealth of technological advancements. However, statistics suggest that due to the natural disasters that are occurring on daily throughout the globe predict that the Earth is getting closer to extinction. The extent of the planet's total devastation is result from the exploitation of nature. Bioregional sustainability is radically altering. Additionally, it attempts to assist people living in countryside that are eco-conscious and slow down their contemporary lifestyles.

The Novel *Jugari Cross* is a piece of writing that aids people in comprehending the issues with their modernized way of life and, more significantly in developing an understanding of the natural system and how does it affect when it is interrupted by human greed. In this work, the author explores ideas of location, reinhabitation, interaction, and residence. The author elaborately discusses the ecology present on the Western Ghats and places particular attention specializes on how man interacts with nature while describing the idea of bioregionalism. The purpose of this paper is to raise readers' awareness of environmental issues and the value of bioregionalism.

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