

Tracing the Echoes of Human Expressions in the Age of Environmental Uncertainty: A Humanistic Reading of Sarah Moss's *The Fell*

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Abstract—This paper titled “Tracing the Echoes of Human Expressions in the Age of Environmental Uncertainty: A Humanistic Reading Sarah Moss's *The Fell* ” examines the echoes of human expressions and experiences during a time of environmental uncertainty in the novel *The Fell* written by Sarah Moss. *The Fell* is set during the period of ecological breakdowns. The novel portrays the emotional expressions, emotional isolation and moral challenges faced by the female protagonist living the state of solitude in contemporary life. Humanistic reading focuses on human emotions, human values and personal experiences. The personas of this novel emphasize a wide range of emotions such as emotional distress, anxiety, psychological fear, guilt, loneliness and optimistic consciousness. The protagonist's decision to go out during the COVID-19 signifies a deep emotional expression for freedom of choice. Her external journey into the hills symbolically depicts personal emotional state. Prohibitions during the COVID-19 period affect not only the physical moment of personas but also their quality of life. This literary work represents multiple human expressions through different personalities, including the protagonist, her son and members of rescue team. Each persona in the novel expresses different emotional state in the environmental uncertainty. This research study critically explores how environmental uncertainty causes complex emotional experiences among characters. The study explores the strong relationship between human expressions and natural environmental conditions.

Keywords— Human Expressions, Environmental uncertainty, COVID-19, The Fell, Sarah Moss

I. INTRODUCTION

The modern materialistic society is facing harmful environmental deterioration such as climate action, deforestation and the loss of natural resources. These natural crises not only affect environment but also deeply influence human expressions. Modern narrative fiction reflects these realities and helps us

understand how people respond such societal challenges. In this context, the social novel *The Fell* by Sarah Moss reflects a meaningful exploration of human experiences during a time of environmental uncertainty. This research study aims to trace human expressions through the lens of eco-feminism by reading *The Fell* from a humanistic perspective. A humanistic point of view mainly focuses on human expressions and emotions, values, personal struggles and the search for meaning in difficult situations. These humanistic ideologies highlight how individuals think, feel and act when they are placed in natural crisis situations. Sarah Moss's *The Fell* is set during a period of COVID-19. The natural calamity plays a predominant part in the novel, especially hills and landscapes that controlled the emotional state of the personalities. The real world becomes a place of escape, reflection and emotional freedom for a protagonist. At the moment, it also conveys difficulties and challenges, showing the complex relationship between human expressions and environment.

Sarah Moss's Psychological novel *The Fell* closely connects personal wounds with larger environmental and social circumstances. The protagonist and the characters in the novel express a wide range of emotional struggles such as fear, anxiety and loneliness. Hope and resilience are shaped by both the environmental and social surroundings. Isolation creates a sense of distance between people, but it also leads them to reflect on their own lives and relationships during lockdown. Natural circumstances become both a support and a reminder of human destruction. The novel asserts the significance of empathy, kindness and human relationship in the humanistic view. Human beings seek meaning of existence and try to maintain their sense of identity in the climate crisis. The appearance of hills and the landscape plays a crucial

role in transforming the protagonist's emotional expressions. Ecological condition appears as a place of freedom and isolation. From a humanistic perspective, the novel analyzes the ethical responsibilities during environmental distress period. This research claims that *The Fell* establishes a powerful exploration of human expressions in the moment of natural disaster. This paper demonstrates the human emotional expressions in different perspective in ecological instability. The traumas faced by the personalities in the novel are not just physical but also psychological. The research study strongly emphasizes how modern British literature can establish the internal lives of individuals during times of environmental and social distress moment. This research study demonstrates how *The Fell* represents the idea that human beings are connected to ecological system. The environmental challenges affect everyday life. This paper critically examines human expressions in the novel by examining how environmental circumstances transform expressions, relationships and personal choices. Modern British Literature provides insights into the human expressions through a humanistic and eco-feministic point of view.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The modern literary writings of Sarah Moss received significant attention for their exploration of human expressions and emotions in the modern social issues. Modern critics highlight how her works strongly associate with personal expressions with larger ecological and societal concerns. *The Fell* has been discussed for its portrayal of isolation, mental stress and the relationship between humans and environment during times of ecological crisis. Several scholars have examined Sarah Moss's writings through the lens of environmental criticism, often linked with Eco-feminism. Several critics argue that Sarah Moss presents environment and landscape not merely as a background but as an active force that shapes human existence. The existential environment plays a predominant part in this novel revealing the emotional state of the personalities, especially during the period of COVID-19. The power of the climate, hills, weather and landscape symbolize both freedom and struggle, showing the complexity of human expression with environment.

Many other research scholars concentrate on the psychological and emotional dimensions of Sarah Moss's literary writings. Scholars note that her characters often feel anxiety, fear and isolation particularly in unfamiliar natural surroundings. These emotional hardships are intensified by social restrictions and environmental uncertainty. Scholars suggest that Moss reveals the inner struggles of her characters, making readers understand their emotional states in a deeper manner. Some critics also examine the themes of gender politics in her novels. They argue that her female protagonist's external and internal journey often navigate complex emotional and social pressure. The female protagonist's decision to step outside during pandemic period can be seen as both an act of personal freedom and a sense of self-realization. Recent literary studies have closely connected Moss's literary writings to pandemic literature which examines how novels represent experiences of alienation, disease and uncertainty. Some critics point out that *The Fell* focuses the tension between personal needs and social needs during times of ecological distress. The novel examines how individuals expose differently to personal and societal restrictions. Existing research reveals that the novel understood through multiple dimensions, including eco-feministic, psychological and humanistic approach. There is still a need to closely analyze how human expressions are transformed by environmental changes within the framework of the novel. This study aims to fulfill that research gap by focusing on the emotional and existential aspects of Moss's narrative, offering a deeper understanding of the connection between environment and human expression.

III. TRACING THE ECHOES OF HUMAN EXPRESSIONS

Echoes of human expressions refer to the ways in which individuals reveal their everyday thoughts, emotions and experiences. These emotions are not only expressed to words alone; they include actions, behavior, creativity and relationships. The study of such expressions is called Humanitarianism, which focus on human values, dignity and the importance of personal experience. Human expressions are seen through strong emotions such as happiness, sadness, anger, fear, loneliness and silence. As an example, Human being may express happiness through laughter or sadness through silence. Such emotional

expressions are very essential communication for conveying inner emotions without using words. Another core element is communication. Human beings express themselves through language, gestures, facial expressions and even body language. Communication means to people to share ideas, build relationships and understand each other. It plays a vital part in maintaining social harmony and cooperation. Kindness, courage or even resistance can be seen as expressions of one's inner self. Creativity is another major component of human expression. Creative arts reflect social realities, cultural values and emotional depth. Human expressions are transformed by social and environmental conditions. Factors such as culture, family, society and environment play a critical role in shaping how individuals express themselves. These expressions become more intense and meaningful during times of environmental degradation. Human expressions are considered a crucial part of human existence.

Human expressions are closely connected to the existential crisis presented in the novel *The Fell*. The story shows how individuals express emotionally and mentally when they placed in difficult and uncertain circumstances. Tracing these echoes of expressions helps us realize the inner struggles of the personalities and the way they cope with solitude, fear and change. One of the most significant human expressions in the novel is fear. The pandemic situation creates a sense of risk and uncertainty. Characters are afraid not only of illness but also of breaking rules and facing consequences. This fear controls their actions and decisions, showing how external circumstances shape human expressions. Another essential expression is anxiety. The characters often experience restless and mentally disturbed because of confinement and lack of freedom. This anxiety is reflected in their thoughts and actions. For example, the protagonist's decision to step outside into the natural world can be seen as attempt to escape emotional pressure. Loneliness and isolation are also central to the novel. Characters are affecting with being alone. This loneliness emphasizes the human need for connection and understanding. The novel asserts hope and resilience. Another important expression is the desire for freedom. The environmental landscape setting becomes a symbol of escape and independence. The protagonist's movement into natural environment represents a personal need to

break free all sorts of social boundaries. The novel strongly emphasizes empathy and understanding. Each character of the novel realizes the environmental problem differently in this novel. The novel highlights the strength and complexity of human expression in times of ecological degradation.

KATE IS OUT and moving and going somewhere, the hill rising under her feet and the sky ahead of her. Wind in the trees and her body working at last, climbing, muscle and bone doing what they're made for. She won't be long, really she won't, only a sip of outside, fast up the lane and over the fields, just a little way up the stone path for a quick greeting to the fells. She'll come near no one; there won't be hikers out here now, barely an hour of daylight left, nothing in the weather to call folk onto the hills. (Moss 55)

Moss's social novel *The Fell* strongly presents the value of human expression in many dimensions. Kate is alone on the hill, others are thinking about her, concerning for her safety, and working together to find her. Her son's fear and the rescue team's efforts establish that even in a world marked by segregation and isolation, human care and support continue to exist. This considers a central humanistic world view that people are capable of compassion, cooperation, and moral responsibility. Hardship situations, instead of breaking human bonds, can sometimes strengthen them. Another important idea in the novel is the impact of isolation. The lockdown period creates a sense of distance between people, and Kate's personal experience on the fell intensifies this feeling. However, the novel suggests that isolation is not only physical but also expressional. Kate's inner loneliness is as substantial as her physical separation from external world. Through a humanistic view, this highlights the need for human connection, understanding, and emotional support in human existence. It warns readers that people cannot fully exist in isolation; they need human relationships to experience complete and secure.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL UNCERTAINTY

The powerful Environmental novel *The Fell* by Sarah Moss exhibits the environmental crisis in a quiet but powerful manner, focusing on how environmental expressions are strongly connected.

The novel is set during a global outbreak period, when Kate, the main character, walks away her house for a walk on the mountains despite tough rules. This small deed offers her into direct contact with the living world, especially the cold, dark, and unpredictable landform of the fell. The environmental disaster in the novel is not indicated through dramatic disasters like floods or fires. Instead, it is communicated through the sternness and indifference of nature world. The cold wind, slippery ground, and darkness of the hill indicate readers that earth is not always gentle or supportive. It exists on its own terms, and humans are only a sub sectional part of it. Kate's hardship shift to move through the landscape exposes how unprotected humans are when they go outside their confined environments. From a humanistic lens, the novel establishes how people feel, express, think, and respond when faced with such emotional exposed conditions. Kate's choice to go out is driven by emotional pressure, loneliness, and a need for freedom. The environmental setting becomes a mirror for her inner state. As she gets confused and injured on the mountain, her fear, regret, and determination become more intense. The conflict is both external environmental instability and internal emotional instability.

Respect for authority is dangerous, she says, how do you think totalitarian governments work? How much does authority respect you, Raven, or me or any of us? And I have motivation, enough motivation to get out of bed every morning and get Matt off to school and go to work and come home and do the shopping the cooking and pay the bills, that's not nothing, that's actually a whole lot, day after day, year after year. I sing. I do gardening. I'm even on the Parish Council. Not at the moment, the raven says, none of that. No, she says not at the moment, no. (Moss 116)

The novel also shows how many characters express to the ecological distress situation. Her son, Rob, and the rescue team encounters anxiety and concern as they attempt to find her. Their responses highlight human values like care, responsibility, and connection. Even though the environmental conditions are extremely harsh, they bring out compassion and cooperation among people. This displays a key idea of humanism—that human beings, despite their weaknesses, are efficient of empathy and support. Another main dimension of

the environmental crisis in the novel is the idea of isolation. The lockdown period already disconnects people from external world, and the wild landscape further isolates Kate. This double isolation reinforces how crucial both society and nature are to human life and relationships. While nature provides freedom and space, it can also be dangerous and unforgiving without human support systems. At the same time, the novel advocates a deeper gratitude for existential environment. It recalls readers that humans cannot fully control the power of environment. Kate's personal experience teaches her and the reader that earth must be addressed with awareness and humanity. The crisis is not just about danger but also about comprehending the limits of human power. In simple terms, *The Fell* exhibits that climate crisis is not always about large-scale destruction. It can be quiet, personal, and emotional. Through Kate's internal journey, the novel associates human feelings with the natural world, showing how closely they are connected. A humanistic reading also highlights this connection, focusing on emotions, relationships, and the shared human experience and expression in times of ecological degradation.

V. HUMANISTIC READING

A humanistic reading in *The Fell* by Sarah Moss concentrates on human expressions and emotions, values, and relationships, especially during hardship situations. This humanistic perspective helps us comprehend how the characters feel, think, and respond to disaster in a deeply personal way. The main character of the novel is Kate, whose actions are controlled by emotional stress and a desire for freedom. From a humanistic point of view, her decision to go out into the hills during lockdown period is not just a violating act, but reaction of her personal battle. She feels confined, lonely, and overwhelmed, and the natural world becomes a space where she makes an effort to regain control over her personal life. This establishes a key humanistic idea: human beings seek meaning, freedom, and emotional balance. The novel also discusses human vulnerability. As Kate faces the pathetic conditions of the fell, she finally realizes her physical and emotional boundaries. The climate reaction makes her situation very dangerous, proving readers that humans are not powerful over nature. This vulnerability is crucial in humanism because it express that people are not perfect, but

they grow through their expressions and experiences.

A breeze came down from the moor and breathed on my belly and chest. I kept slipping on slimy rocks, knew the water wasn't deep enough to cushion a fall. If I knocked my head, I thought I would lie here and drown, they would find me in my wet undies, blood wavering like weed, but I kept going, my mind now full of the image of myself sitting in the pool which had become rounded and deep, dappled with leaf- shade, where my arms could lift and float tanned by the rusty water.

(Moss 60)

Another predominant humanistic part in the novel is empathy. Kate's son, Rob, becomes worried when she does not return, and the rescue team works together to find her. Their support and effort express how people support for one another, even in uncertain period of life. These moments enrich the humanistic belief in compassion, cooperation, and shared responsibility. Another humanistic element is isolation. The lockdown separates people physically as well as emotionally. Kate's isolation on the mountains reflects her inner loneliness. However, through the responses of others, the novel shows that human connection still exists, even when people are apart. This strongly declares the importance of human relationships. From a humanistic lens, the landscape setting of the fell is not just a background. It interacts with the characters' expressions. The landscape reflects Kate's emotional state -confusing, cold, and uncertain. At the moment, it pushes her to reflect on her choices and understand herself better. Nature, in this sense, becomes a vital part of her emotional journey. In simple terms, a humanistic reading of *The Fell* examines on how people experience crisis emotionally and morally. It reveals that behind every action, there are feelings, fears, and hopes. The novel teaches us that even in hard situations, human beings search for meaning, connection, and understanding, making their expressions deeply relatable and real.

VI. CONCLUSION

To conclude, *The Fell* by Sarah Moss provides a deeply moving exploration of human life during a time of crisis period, and a humanistic introspection supports us understand its meaning in a clear and

personal way. Rather than presenting the environmental crisis as a distant or large-scale disaster, the novel brings it closer to everyday human expression. It recalls how crisis can exist in small, quiet moments—through fear, isolation, and emotional struggle—and how these moments shape human behavior and understanding. From a humanistic introspection, the novel strongly emphasizes the importance of human expressions. Kate's internal and external journey across the fell is not just a physical movement through a dangerous landscape, but also an emotional journey through confusion, loneliness, and self-realization. Her decision to step outside the boundaries of safety reflects a deep inner need for self-realization. This highlights us that human beings are not only controlled by rules and logic, but also by humanistic expressions. In times of COVID-19, these expressions often become stronger and more visible. The novel also portrays human vulnerability in a powerful manner. As Kate struggles with uncertainty of the natural environment, she is forced to confront her own limitations. This experience shows that humans are not in control of everything, especially when it comes to nature. A humanistic reading does not see this vulnerability as weakness, but as an important part of being human. It is through such moments of weakness that people learn, grow, and gain a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them.

The natural environment in the novel also plays a significant role in shaping human expression. *The fell* is not simply a background landscape setting but an active force that guides Kate's thoughts and actions. It reflects her emotional state and challenges her sense of control. From a humanistic point of view, natural setting becomes a space for self-reflection and self- realization. It guides humility, reminding humans that they are only a part of a larger world. This understanding motivates respect for nature and awareness of human restrictions. Overall, the novel asserts that environmental problem is not always dramatic or visible in obvious manner. It can be subtle, personal, and closely connected to human expressions. Through Kate's internal and external expressions, the story strongly associates the outer world of nature with the inner world of human expressions. A humanistic reading gives these connections into focus, showing how people react to crisis with fear, hope, care, and resilience. *The Fell* teaches us that

even in difficult and uncertain times; human beings continue to search for meaning, connection, and understanding. It recreates the strength found in vulnerability and the importance of empathy in sustaining human relationships. By focusing on individual experiences and expressions, the novel represents a realistic and relatable image of life during crisis. Thus, a humanistic reading reminds us see the deeper meaning of the novel, enriching us that at the heart of every humanistic crisis lies the human experience, shaped by feelings, relationships, and the constant effort to make sense of the world.

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