

TRANSFORMATION AND TESTIMONY: A FEMINIST-ECOCRITICAL READING OF THE LOTHFA FOLKTALE “HOW A SAD MOTHER BECAME A SEROW”

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the Lotha Naga folktale “How a Sad Mother Became a Serow” as a complex narrative of ecofeminist resistance, in which a woman’s metamorphosis into a mythical serow embodies both the extremity of maternal suffering under patriarchal neglect and the emergence of a resilient, alternative agency. Employing a multi-faceted theoretical framework that integrates feminist, ecocritical and Structuralist analysis, this paper investigates how the tale re-conceptualizes the interrelations among gender, environment and moral consciousness. Drawing on Simone de Beauvoir’s theory of woman as the “Other,” Angela Carter’s writings on the female body as a site of pain and transcendence, and Maria Tatar’s work on suffering as formative to identity, this analysis frames the folktale as a profound allegory for the transformation of silence into agency and personal trauma into collective ethical insight. The argument is further illuminated by Audre Lorde’s imperative to break socially enforced silences as a crucial act of self-definition and liberation. Ultimately, the tale’s oral stylistics and communal narrative structure are shown to reinforce its cultural role as a vessel of shared memory, where feminine grief and the sentient natural world intersect to chronicle a legacy of endurance against intersecting patriarchal and ecological adversities.

KEYWORDS: Lotha Folktale, Feminist Ecocriticism, Maternal Suffering, Transformation and Resilience, Patriarchy and Ecology, Oral Narrative Tradition, Structuralist Analysis

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