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Anita's green protagonists Nanda and Raka in *Fire on the Mountain*

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Abstract: This Paper focuses on Anita's green protagonist Nanda and Raka's close association with nature. These women are adjacent with nature and they create bondage between nature and themselves in the counterpart of their life. On the other hand, their childhood memories have handy relevance with nature and they incorporate their positive response to the environment is accessible. Anita validates women understand nature more than man. It illustrates her skilful painting of the landscape with beautiful scenery and never leaving any minute picture for depiction. All the human problems are to be set right only when we get back to nature and surrender ourselves in the hands of it.

Key Words: Green, bondage, memories, landscape, nature.

Anita divided her novel into three parts. The first part Nanda Kaul at Carignano, the second part Raka comes to Carignano and the third part Ila Das leaves Carignano. In all three parts Carignano plays a vigorous role amid two protagonists. In first part Nanda's attitude towards nature expressed clearly. In second Raka's closeness with the nature expelled and in third part Ila's acquaintance with nature is revealed magnificently.

Nanda Kaul was dreary, tall and skinny old lady embracing with her traditional silk sari. She had deception to unite with the pine tree and desires to be reflected as a tree. She assumed the desolateness is the primary feature of this domicile. The decor from her home is tremendous from the polar side of Kasauli bursting with mountains and in the south had



steppes with rocks and pines and with its comprehensive view. Intermittently eagle whirled this abode for its pure dainty and air. In her fledgling phase as a soul mate of Vice chancellor and mother of seven children's accustomed with desires, assurances, enquiries and plentiful needs but now she was nurtured with everything and she urged to devote her time with nature to be alone with cicadas and pines. She esteemed to bestow her time tranquilly in the mount ridge at Carignano. She sensed inordinate chilliness and blossoming of assistance after she settles down there.

The first part Nanda Kaul at Carignano pacts her intimacy with nature intruded by the mail man who pass the information on her great granddaughter's arrival. Her house is in such a way she could visualize the blue waves of Himalayas flowing in the line of ice and the snow sketched upon the sky. The apricot trees are very close to her home. Sometimes she stoops to pick some bright apricot from the dry grass but the bright hoopoe flow from far off and limp it with its beak. It had its nest outside her bedroom. She sometimes saw, it feeds her nestling. It filled her heart with pleasure and the nestling's screams were shrill and it would madden anyone who hears it.

The yellow rose slept for eleven months and its magnificence came out in the month of April like a sleeping beauty reborn from her sighing. The sweet angelic frilling infant flounces its beautiful flowers all over Kausali. Before opening itself Nanda identified the handwriting of her daughter. Asha the beautiful daughter of hers wanted her granddaughter to spend some time with her mother. Raka who was recently recovered from typhoid and she was suffering from heat and humidity of Mumbai. Everyone advised her to recuperate herself by going to hillside. Asha decided to send Raka to Nanda Kaul for her summer vacation and spend her holidays in Kasauli. Nanda Kaul felt excessive assurance of aggressiveness and aplomb in the letter of her daughter. Her eyes then turned to the side of apricot trees. The cloudy hydrangeas and pines are scattered and created the hissing sound of the breeze. Nanda Kaul felt the letter is like an insect on her lap. She was meddling with her impending arrival of her great granddaughter. She longed to continue with the stillness and calmness which she enjoyed earlier.



Nanda then slowly get back to life by looking at the bloomed yellow rose creeper. It finished its blooming in the previous month. It gashed with summer heat. She felt as flower that finished its blooming already she had also done everything to her family. After finishing all her duties she finally settled down in Kasauli. She remembers her past life in Punjab as a wife of Vice Chancellor. Her house was always over crowded with visitors. She sat on her cane chair by mending the clothes. She managed her hubbub life and everyone is praising her as a queen by doing duties to her husband and her children. She saw them as crawling grey buys who would try to fascinate her by their appreciation.

Mr. Kaul always wanted Nanda should be in the silk saree to invite her guests. She cooked for all and taking care of her children's mischief as falling from the swing, stung by the wasp, slapped by the fourth and created huge cry by breaking their teeth. She felt fully freed from these nuisances. But this letter reminded the whole incidents of her past. She wanted her life must fill with sounds of cicadas and the pines. She wants to sit near the silver plain. She saw the eagle swept around the place by gliding thousand feet below. She hears the Cuckoo's soft melody in her garden with the domestic tone. Then she went to kitchen and informed about the arrival of her great granddaughter to Ram Lal.

The bright sunlight spread over the tiles like a lacquer. She suddenly hears the crackling and hissing phone call from her friend Ila Das. Her voice was shrill and strident. Her hideous voice confuses the hearers like a long nail scratching at the glass plane. While speaking Nanda's concentration diverted to hen which drags the worm inch by inch from the ground. She found herself in the position of warm. She never wants any one to disturb her either her friend Ila nor her great granddaughter Raka. Ila's tone tuned anxious by hearing the arrival of Raka. She was pleading to visit her and her great granddaughter. Nanda prolonged her desire by saying she will inform after Raka settled down in that place. Ila observed Nanda's indifference in her voice.

The sunlight was thickened and the flies were too lazy to fly and it is buzzed languorously and voluptuously by the midday webbing. The flies are making their euphonious music esoteric and the cicadas made their music in open-air. Everything in nature



was strangely rasping by the humming, shrilling, and buzzing of the birds. She was in frustration simply laid down in her bed as a lizard on the stone wall. She saw the abrupt quarrel between the parrots. They screamed and scolded and shot off from the place like a rocket.

It was the spring the evening seemed very dark. The phlox bloomed in the border of the lawn. It appears fresh white in the moonlight. The crisp grass of the lawn spread out with its fragrance. That night she was like a haunted fearful bird with distracted and disturbing mood. Through the window she watched the flushed ravine. The plains are mounted with soft tawny light. The sun floats like a balloon and the pine needles have glistened like a silk. She reads the pillow book of Sei Shonagon. *When a woman lives alone*, she loved to read the book repeatedly. The sun light slowly melted with blue and violets. She wants to preserve the moment of the Kasauli's view by painting. She called English artist to make this scene immemorial.

The guests crowded the place under the eucalyptus and bougainvillea. She has to carry too many cups of tea to her husband, mother in law and their guests. She lacked privacy in her olden days and she now longed for that. She felt her life was like the heavy difficult book. She read that book earlier and she never wants to re-read it. She wanted to discharge all the duties. The caring of others mislaid her character. After her husband's death, she settled down at Kasauli. Her children engaged her for few days and distributed their belongings. All evaded away from her house within a short period. She concentrated on her garden and stated with elegant perfection.

She already lost her heart to her own children. At last, they all abandon her and now she used to the life of isolation. She never wants anyone to disturb her from the closeness with nature. She saw the perfect settings of pergola roses. Ram Lal suggested potato chips with tomato ketchup. Nanda filled the vase with some flowers. The pale of flush turned round like rainbow in her heart. At first the blue than the violet and it turned to the green and after faded as yellow. Then again it reached its pearl colour. She could not differentiate Raka from the other children in her home. She then recalls she has to take concern of her granddaughter



if she comes to her place. Then she felt Raka's arrival would surely make a lot of changes in her present routine life.

The wind ruffled and the sunlight glistened the cuckoo sang in the chestnut tree down the road. In a modern satiric manner, the pine trees doubly bend and welcomed Raka. Nanda thought her disparate behavior was an utter misnomer. Anita considered Raka as the moon. But she never perceived any quality of it. Her face is not round and she was not calm and radiant. Nanda thought her as a dark cricket and she frights like a mosquito with thin legs and she has a resemblance to an insect. Raka lived in busy Mumbai her entire atmosphere felt different to her. That's the first time "she heard the voice of silence" (Desai 44)

Nanda and Raka hugged in a formal way. Their bones are colliding and they felt unaccommodating and angular in nature. Raka felt everything as a darted of the tree. She considers Nanda as a pine tree, her grey sari as a rock and all other components as bareness and stillness surround the Carignano garden. "To Nanda Kaul, she was still an intruder, an outsider, a mosquito flown up from the plains to tease and worry. With a blatant lack of warmth, she sighed, 'Well, better come in'," (44) Nanda was completely detached with her great granddaughter.

Raka walked around the room with a bare foot. She was like a newly caged and wildly tamed. She had no interest in flowers. She discarded herself with snail's shell. She sensed the yellow summer dust in the room. Raka while bending from the window looked the man-made damage over nature. The factory smoke emitted through chimneys. The black smoke carves fused in the milky blue afternoon sky. She recollected the stories told by their parents about the beauties of Himalayas and not devastating factories. She never expects this in that attractive village.

Raka leaned against the crusted bark of the tree and noticed the large green rooftop, low building, bright geraniums baskets, white muslin curtains, giant deodar tree, and fresh swept market tennis court. She felt everything is sleeping except the cicadas fiddling. She surveyed the place by resting on the spine trunk. Raka enquired about the factory to Ram Lal. It is a Pasteur Institute which makes serum for the injections for the bite of mad dog. She



enquired about the smoke and he said they preparing serum for the whole country so it is boiling all over the day. Ram Lal informed about the howling of the jackals and the ghost story of the village.

Nanda enquired about the plan of Raka. She seethed silently like a black mosquito humming over conglomerate. Raka had a gift of disappearing silently without anyone's notice. She vanished around the stony hill side. Wandering slowly down the lane, Stripping some thorny bush and take berries and she examined the insect under the leaf. While appearing back her legs were brown. Nettles stung her fingers; she had thoughtful eyes by visiting the strange fantastic improbable land. Though Nanda wanted to get away from her, Raka's dusty make her to get ready with hot water for her bath. The child's behavior was disquieting. Like a magic rabbit she vanishes and enjoys the mountain cliff.

Raka was doing the brave flaw experiment and she was entirely different from her own daughters and grandchildren. She was freak and never makes any demand. She never even wants her great grandmother know her secret. She was burrowing around the sandy loam and hill side pine needles. Raka was recluse by nature and she had an instinct of rejection and sacrifice. Nanda after discerning the child spontaneously generated the veneration over her rise and stir.

Raka leapt down the ravine. It was hotter and the red dust struck on her toes and the sand ragged on her sandals. She billowed herself with the wide open mountain and she concentrated on agaves. The central dagger was guarded by the curved spike ring. It was contorted by the charred pine trunks and paralyzed by the attitudes of rocks. The splotches of blood, yellow stains in paper, ashes of bones, tins of tulip ham and Kissan jam, rubber tyre, burnt kettles and bent wheels are dumped there. She saw yellow snake sunned on the peak of the flat rock. She keenly observed the slithering shade of the tails of the snake. She did not saw that creature earlier in her life. The sweat ran to the roots of her hair in the dusty storms of the plain.

Raka scrambled on the uphill. She went through the soil and gravel and stared the avalanches of clanking pebbles of empty tins. Her appearance disturbs the cricket and they



chorally raised their voice. She was with full of joy and began to sing with some different language. It's not Geneva, Sanskrit or the Greek. It was incessant and shrill which make the buzz to come out. She was in the cliff's lip. She came to the garden of Carignano and visualized the green roofed building which was isolated. Ram Lal waiting for her with the hot water. She slides herself down from the top. She saw the bird fall from the nest, the nest from the tree, the grass stuck the hair and the thorns stuck her sandals.

Raka's trip to Carignano was very adventurous. The setting of the sun is like orange haze dropping towards the westwards. She narrated the picture of yellow cobra sleeping and was from far off place. Ram Lal advised her not to go that much far; it would create some harm to her. She expressed her willingness to meet jackal. He informed her that it bites means others have to take her to Pasteur Institute and they will give fourteen injections on her stomach. He advised her to meet babas in the evening. He said other children are play in the garden with their parents and they have lemonade and Vimto.

Ram Lal's narration of hill station club created the fascination on her. The life associated with club she observed in Delhi, Manila and Madrid she behaved as an outsider. She maintained distance over that life. He advised instead of roaming around the hillside and getting hurt and ugly scar better to go to hill station club. While taking with him dust storm came. It gashed across the place and he tightly holds his hat. Raka observed it from the stone the densely yellow hazed gathered and hurled across the plain. It scattered the mango groves and sweep the mountain foot. The cliff was flounced over the engulfed Kasauli.

Ram Lal protected Raka in the kitchen by closing the doors. She observed from the window a white hen was lifted and toasted in the air. It's beaks snatched and traumatized like the glass. The yellow clouds created bonfire in the heart and the great conflagration bobbed across the dusty clouds. She asked him whether the fire they made for boiling water would spread to forest and cause forest fire. He was ignorant of the situation and he narrated every summer there was water scarcity in Kasauli. Once they had forest fire in the village they don't have water to put off. It destroyed the whole house and the two buffaloes died in it in the previous year.



She remembered the burnt hut on the upper mall. The lady in the cottage got fire in order to save the cat. Her hair and eye lashes half burnt through the fire. She got mad and admitted in the asylum. Some created rumour that there in the night they hear the sound of the cat howling. Ram Lal looked out the storm dashed the brass vessel in the tin roofs and stone walls. The raucous poltergeists of dusty storm may have a chance to set the forest fire. He was worried that he was old to fetch water to stop the fire. Raka instantly said she would get the water and stop the fire. But the wind blows heavily and it dusted the whole area without visualizing anything.

The air reminds cool and chill. The sun's heat appears as an angry crab ready to fight. The dizzy parrots sputtered away from the pines. Phosphorescent flock treated the birds to fly from their nest. Without causing any harm the wind gets back normal and Ram Lal took the brass bucket for the girl to the bath. The Cuckoo's identical note given them the gay relief and she spread her legs like the pair of scissors. Nanda's silk folds slapped bumbled like the flies in the air like a buzzing alarm.

Nanda after having tea informed to Raka she is also accompanying her for a walk. The child felt hungry after having tea. It made to ramble and forge for her food in the hills. She urged for the berries and pine nuts to growl her flat belly. She ate a little at the time of a meal. At tea time she was shy to ask for the biscuit. She felt hungry at dinner. She searched for ripe berries and sour oxalis leaves would satisfy her hunger. She was despondently tassel ling the purple bell about her great grandmother's idea of the walk. Nanda appeared with walking stick and grey gym shoe. She offered to go to Monkey point.

Raka felt her pair with Nanda is awkward. Walking in the hills at afternoon dull summer dust fused everywhere. The pine needles are glistened and riffled. Nanda's walking stick waved around the pebbles and she was narrating the story which happened in her city earlier. She also told the same story of Ram Lal that the house was burnt in the forest fire there was no drop of water to put off it. The old lady was burnt and admitted in an asylum. But nature's magnificence spread widely by one spray of rain it would produce hundreds of flowers and the whole place would fill with lilies, dahlias like a heaven.



Nanda informed the pleasant cottage was taken by the doctor of Pasteur Institute. The beautiful tennis court is now not used by anyone and it was the place for the chicken run. Across the road, there was the beautiful garden situated in Kasauli. It is now used as Army billet. Nature's grandeur was slowly destroyed by the scientific monstrosity and atomic reactor. In early days children's spend their time happily with nature and they had more glorious moments in their lives. But now kids are confined to sit in their home with video games and watching TV. It spoils their health and eating habit. The natural way of eating the vegetables and playing with nature in a harmonious way would maintain fitness and comfortable to lead their healthy life.

On the way, they saw the succulent blades attract the tourists. They write their names in the incongruous barbed wire. The fine quite place was spoiled by the arrival of army and tourists. The Kasauli is the place of heaven is now disturbed by everyone. While Nanda first came to this place it was apt to the poem of Gerard Manley Hopkins

I have desired to go
Where springs not fail,
To fields where flies no sharp and sided hail
And a few lilies blow.
And I have asked to be
Where no storms come,
Where the green swell is in the havens dumb,
And out of the swing of the sea. (Desai 63)

Though this poem was written on some other's place it's suitably fit for it earlier. Then with loud voice, Nanda showed the chestnut tree to the child. The branches are swinging, leaping, and crushing the leaves, showering like the horse by the Langurs. Raka too laughed at the old langur which sits on the top of the tree. It showed its teeth with jumping and gibbering anger and derision.

Both of them got attracted by the mother langur which deliberately cradling the infant with its elegant arm. The infant's face was filled with tears and worries. It looked aged than



its normal. Others play happily like the clown as the Tarzan in the tree. It fascinated everyone's attraction by clapping hands, hallooing like the wild cinema heroes, in a bunch all leaped to the half ruined tin roof. Children and servants banged with bombardment and all shouted and vanished.

Nanda and Raka quite refreshed with the laughing in the downhill. Nanda said the old house was turned into summer holiday home. The children's from Delhi happily spent their time and walk around the place as a picnic with the matron. Then she enquired she has the interest to go to school in Kasauli. With numb, she nodded her head. She was dejected by the "thoughts of school, of hostel, of discipline, order and obedience"(65). Then she abruptly ran down and waited in the bottom of the hill. She was more familiar of the forest then Nada Kaul.

They reached the flowerless twisted monkey park. Under the trees some benches, concrete shelters and bus stands was built by the municipal corporation. The radiance lucidly passed in the evening sky. Nanda with trembling voice said to her she would watch from there itself and she could enjoy on her own. Raka happily popping up and springing down and she flew like the bird and she enjoyed the whole situation. She reached the top of the hill within the fraction of seconds and blends herself with nature. She already had the plan to visit this park alone without anyone's notice. She felt secrecy is the essence of relishes'.

Raka had the instinct of an explorer and discoverer. She never wants anyone to observe her. But now she was nervous by the intently watching by her great grandmother. She was totally relieved from all kinds of stress by merging herself with the exhilarated evening light, the blade of the grass and the pleasant blowing wind swung her as to throw away. She hears the whip of her dress, and she collected some rose and flew from the top to the bottom of the hill and as escort Eagles slowly circled around her.

Raka felt she was higher than eagles, Kasauli, Sanawar and even all other hills. The climate was cool and the summer sun never scorches her. The golden moss was softly found on the below. The northern side hills flowed with waved colours as gold, blue, violet, indigo like the sea. The winds rushing sound from the pine would appear as the sea. She began to



consider herself on the sea the clouds appeared as the waves and the wind sound appeared as the sound from the sea. She shouted and played as she was ship wrecked and clung to a rock on the boat. She sang merrily.

Her ear drum tuned to the roaring waves, wind and the darkness approaching the hill. Then she remembered her granny on the bench and she reluctantly moving down the hill. Nanda scold the girl with agitation and got back her nerves. They silently walked back to their home. They heard the invisible music from the far off bird in that defied night. The village was filled with lights and Ram Lal eagerly waiting for them and opened the gate.

Their Monkey point walk was not successful so Nanda did not suggest another. She silently took her book and began to read. After Raka get back to her place Nanda stand near the window and observed children with their parents as Rani, Rolo and perambulated sedately. Raka rarely visits the upper and lower mall. She loved to be roam around the mountain and hill and quite close with nature. She visited the village valleys, wheat thrashed mechanically by the cattle, Corn and pumpkins dried on the roof top. The village people saw her but she never spoke to none. While seeing any foxes red fur she immediately wants to come to the home on time without the hindrance of fox on the way to her home. Raka had the gift of avoiding the dispensable.

Nanda asked to visit the nearby club but it made her recollect the boarding school at Sanawar. Nanda enquired about her parents had taken to clubs and parties. She shook her head and remembered her father tried hard to make her come out from the nutshell and her mother too try to arrange tea party to friends at her birthday. She considered it as painful occasions. Her illness and weakness made her less socialize. She was bed ridden for a month. Her hair was shorn to scalp. She was in secret thoughts by hearing the sepulchral reading of her mother under the hot revolving electric fan. Her mind filled with the sounds of cicadas and the wind from the pine trees.

Raka asked Nandi that she was also never visited the club. Nanda had a little jerk and she gives a snort of laughter. She bends down to reach her face to touch the nose of the child and said "You are exactly like me" (71). Raka was pell-mell by the blatant advance of Nanda.



Her small face was pinched her lips together. Then Nanda regained her authority, composure, and distance for her age. They both averted their face. In the modern age though we have appreciation we maintain in distance to express it. Artificiality upholds everywhere.

The whirling and whistling sound of the nestling made Raka survey the hoopoe's nest and Nanda Kaul stared at the Woollen hills. The bird strived to snap the dragon flies and moths in its beaks to share for their nestling. Hoopoe was jealous of Raka because she came out with a bare foot to take the ripest and sweetest apricots in the morning. The remaining apricots were taken by Ram Lal and he made delicious jam and kept it the glass jar. The bird had to catch the moth and drag out from the earth for its survival. Sometimes they have to fight with the other bulbuls, yellow-bibbed and bottomed outrageously cheeky birds. The hoopoes disconsolately waiting in the apricot tree in a distressed and baffled mood. Raka broke out from her silence and said they are waiting to feed their babies. Nanda with suspicion and disdainful heart asked to Raka that she wanted to go to evening walk.

Now Raka has divulged herself from all constraints. She felt she was no longer the daughter of the grasshopper and she should never be like an insect. She wanted to wander like a ravine. Nanda keenly observing the child from the window and saw the mysterious behavior of the child she was walking backward to the tree by recalling the past. Raka then hides somewhere and she did not appear on the top of the cliff. She knew the other route to escape from her granny. Nanda worried about the girl's fascination and bothered about her reaction after seeing the Pasteur's Institute. Raka skipped her evening tea and came late to the home by chanting the mantra inaudibly "don't care - I don't care - I don't care for anything!" (80)

Raka's hair was dusty and her knees were scratched and feared about her great grandmother may be enquired about these. She simply showed the leathery flowers that grow around the brown edges. They say ponies carrying small children to the hotel. Nanda asked Raka she was interested in pony ride. But she simply rejected the offer. She jumped with happiness by showing the Cinereous twilight with the copper glow of the full moon. Nanda was uncertain about the full moon. The darkened sky reddened the glow.



Raka was shivered by the fire and she never saw that before in her life. The fire was far away they could never smell the burning of pine trees and they never heard the crackling and hissing sound. It was like the fire in the dream. The fire sparks run around the hill side. Raka is the only person who understood the special value and the real importance of Carignano. Thus, Nanda wanted to hand over this property to Raka and she had full trust on her that she would safeguard the place by knowing the virtue of it.

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