

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PHILOSOPHY IN THE MAHABHARATA: THE DEFILEMENT OF KHANDAVA AND DRAUPADI

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ABSTRACT

The Mahabharata is a multi-layered text which can be read and interpreted from myriad perspectives. The epic betrays serious environmental concerns which carries deep philosophical intent and is relevant in the present-day context when human intervention is causing serious threats to the natural eco-space. The twin episodes of the burning down of the Khandava forest and the disrobing of Draupadi have been explored in order to unravel the deeper environmental issues latent within them. In the case of the former, the message is rather explicit whereas in the latter it assumes metaphorical dimensions. The idea of the essential and the underlying oneness of all life forms constitute an important message of the Bhagvada Gita which has been very neatly woven into the body of the entire epic narrative. The present article seeks to explore these ideas vis-à-vis the twin episodes under consideration.

KEYWORDS: *Mahabharata, Environment, Nature, Khandava, Draupadi*