

## ESCHEWING NATURE FOR ESCAPISM: A STUDY ON CHRISTINE AMSDEN'S GATEWAY

By

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### Abstract

*Christine Amsden is a blind American writer famous for science fiction stories. Though she is blind she has the power to sense the beauty of nature which induce her to protect the environment through her writing, on the other hand, she depicts the pathetic condition of the human beings who failed to concern the beauty of nature as if they are blind. The short story Gateway is about travel in starship Prelude, to create a new world. The only contact between the new world and the earth is through the portholes. Amsden has used the portholes as a symbol to expose the upcoming tragedy. The short story reveals the name of only three main characters, Estelle Stevenson the protagonist, and her parents Jerry and Emma Stevenson. Amsden also brings a nostalgic feeling to characters when their life is questioned. Loss of life, technological disaster, search for identity are some important themes in the short story. The paper is viewed in an ecological perspective which gives the warning to the people who goes behind technology without understanding its consequence. Further, this paper is about the preservation of our natural source instead of depending on the other new world.*

**Keywords:** *ecology, technologic disaster, identity, nostalgic feeling, warning*

Christina Amsden is an American writer, She writes primarily about people, and later she was interested in writing science fiction work. She is also a teacher of a workshop on writing at Savvy Authors. She also does some freelance editing work. She has won many awards such as Dan Porters Legacy Award for Fiction (2018) and Gold medal winner of Global Ebook Award for fantasy and cotemporary Fiction. Christina is the award-winning author of the Immortality virus (2011).

The story is narrated by the protagonist Estelle Stevenson who is eighteen years old. Her parents Jerry and Emma Stevenson, both are the doctors of philosophy in

engineering they are famous for their work portholes. It is a two connected gateway, which connects the new world with the earth. "The mission of the *Prelude* was to establish a gateway on another world" (Amsden 31). They travelled along with five hundred colonists. The colonist was allowed to have children during their voyage, the extra numbers were strictly monitored.

Estelle Stevenson was the first baby to be born in the starship. She missed the exact happiness which was experienced by her parents and by the people on the earth. She was expecting to experience the view of sunset and snowfall. Her parents could mark a year by the passing of the season, for

Estelle, it is simply a passage of 364 days. Though she was born on the starship she was eagerly waiting to lead a life like other peoples in the earth. This shows her nostalgic feeling. She pictures the view of the earth in her mind. "Living my whole life on the starship caused me to miss out on many of the things the adults took for granted, like sunsets and snowfall" (Amsden 31).

The Life which is bounded with numbers of adventure and with a lot of new excitement is just a dream for Estelle. Meeting new people and making friends is also like reading a fictional book. Our earth has enough sources to lead a life for people, but they fail to protect it and create a new lifestyle which is a life-risking task.  $\frac{3}{4}$  of our earth is with water, but as humans instead of saving it, they destroy it. Polluting it through sending industrial waste into water and affects the consumer who depends on the water for their lively being. Sending satellite to Moon to find water and to start livelihood. Globalization is an upcoming threat to the whole world. The main reason for globalization is climatic change and another important reason is because of the development of industrialization. "world temperature have been rising since about 1890, but they start to go up steeply around 1970, when industrialization is most intense, which is the real proof of global warming" (State of Fear 101).

The colonist reached the new world. The narrator, Estelle was very happy to enter the new world, Her first impression on the New Earth was somewhat mixed with a lot of thought. "The sight of sky above me and

ground bellow was a tremendous sight"(Amsden 31). The soil on the new world has microorganisms that are helpful for them to grow plants."The place looked barren" (Amsden 31). The people should be responsible to cultivate the land to make comfortable creating new earth. There are many rich natural sources in our earth which were not given proper care by the people but now they are ready to create an artificial world with all the facilities of the earth.

The natural gift by God is scattered by the people and they go behind the technology. Techno life makes people live an artificial life. The fake life of people gives rise to the emergence of fake products such as food, air, water, etc. which are the basic needs of the people. The contemporary words are behind genetic engineering which artificially holds the richness of nature. "Genetic Engineering uses the tools the Creator has given us to carry out good works on the planet. Unprotected crops are eaten by pests, or die of frost and drought. Genetic modification can prevent that, useless crops acreage, leave the more untouched wilderness, and still feed the hungry" (Next120).

The natural life is disturbed by artificial life, and the sufferings experienced is inconsolable. People voluntarily accept unprotected life and are ready to accept the sufferings. The only way of communication from the New Earth to the world is through the porthole. "The gateway was impressive, standing fifteen feet tall, and it was fully large enough for trucks to pass through unhindered. Eventually, a roadway would be

built through the porthole, but now for now it was just a gigantic circle supported by massive steel beams. The middle of the gateway was a swirl of gray, much like smoke. Nothing on the other side could be seen" (Amsden 32).

Jerry and Emma Stevenson did some testing to have some connection with the God created Earth. They first send a rubber ball through the porthole and then some animal. They were happy about their project success. But soon all their happiness was vanished by the emergence of some unpredictable dangerous creature which took away the lives of some people. Jerry informed the people in the New Earth that the other end of the porthole is no longer is on the earth, and it should be closed. Before the colonist was organized five were dead, people started to shout out of fear to "kill the rest of them!" (Amsden 33).

The words "kill the rest of them!" are expressed out of fear. without knowing about the threat of life people love to experience many life-risking tasks. Many people by birth engage them in thrilling experiences. "It's called the novelty gene. It's the gene the drives us to take risks, engage in thrill-seeking behavior" (Next 258). "At the mercy of this D4DR gene, which controlled the chemical levels in the brain.

Something called dopamine was driving Bard to take risks, and to enjoy the experience, to crave it. Brain scans and other tests proved that people like Bard could not control the desire to take risks" (Next 260). Life should not be taken as an object to enjoy pleasure. Human beings are the beautiful gift by God created by his own reflection to enjoy their life in the god gifted paradise the earth.

The colonist made an effort to save other peoples from the creatures. The colonist is armed to save their life. The people hid inside the shuttles in the *Prelude*, There are six shuttles has the capability to hold fifty people. When they were ready to fly the creature started to attack them with laser weapons, some people were saved along with the narrator. They returned to Earth, it shows the sunshine of hope in the life of colonists.

The people in the *Prelude* lost their identity and finally with the fear of life they regained it. People have started to lead an artificial life, by losing their originality. The artificial life will lead to disaster which a human soul cannot accept. To remain in a safe place they should spend some time to prevent their boon by God. The boon can never be replaced by any artificial sources. It should be prevented before it is too late.

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