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To The Study of Ecology, Literature, And the Relationships Between the Natural and Human Environments

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Abstract

Ecocriticism is a relatively young academic discipline that studies literature and the environment in connection to one another. An examination of environmental themes in Indian English poetry is the overarching goal of this research. Poems written by Indians in English and their varied perspectives on environmental protection are the subject of this study's ecocritical examination. Ecocriticism refers to the field that studies how literature and the environment are interconnected. Landscapes, flora, fauna, and natural resources are all part of ecological research. Ecocriticism is a literary movement that examines the relationship between human and non-human social existence through the lens of current environmental challenges. Ecocriticism is one of the more recent revisionist currents that have swept the humanities in recent decades. Global eco-disasters have put our ecosystem in danger. Because of the threat it poses to people, other animals, and the environment, environmentalists are currently very concerned about it.

Keywords: Ecology, Literature, Natural, Ecocriticism and Environments

Introduction

The ecology of water bodies including rivers, lakes, and wetlands is profoundly impacted by any change to the normal hydrological cycle within a river basin. The only way for people to help with environmental conservation is for them to realize that their actions always have consequences. As a result, you should think about everything deeply. When people fail to appreciate even the smallest of things, it may set in motion a chain reaction that ends with the extinction of species, which in turn might wipe out whole ecosystems, which could wipe out humanity, and so on.

One of the more recent revisionist currents that has swept the humanities in recent decades is ecocriticism. Our environment is now in jeopardy due to global eco-disasters. When it comes to solving the world's environmental issue, science and technology alone are insufficient. Our perspective on the natural world has to shift. Literature isn't meant to soar above life; it serves a purpose. Literary critics

have long neglected nature; so, environmentally focused writing cries out for a more comprehensive appreciation of nature's importance. 'A global emerging movement' has emerged in the field of ecocriticism during the last 30 years. Researchers are currently working to refine its parameters. It was William Rueckert's 1978 critical essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" that first used the term ecocriticism. The Greek word "oikos" (meaning "household" or "earth") is the origin of the English word "logy," which means "logical discourse," and the English term "eco" is derived from the same source. Taken as a whole, they denote literary critiques of the home and its environs.

Incorporating ecological ideas or ecological practices into literary analysis is what ecocriticism is all about, says Rueckert. "As a study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist's praxis" is how ecocriticism is defined by Lawrence Buell in *The Environmental Imagination* (390).

Ecocriticism has evolved from traditional nature writing in two ways: first, by taking a strong moral stance in favor of the natural world, and second, by drawing parallels between the human and non-human aspects of that environment. It is not about birds, plants, or animals in Thoreau's writings, but rather his relationship with them-or, one might even say, "*himself in connection with nature*," as Joseph Wood Krutch puts it. In 1948, Henry David Thoreau wrote... According to Patrick D. Murphy, Ecocriticism is a branch of literary criticism that focuses on the interplay between humans and other species.

There are two tiers of ecology: shallow and deep. Since man is the only literary creature to ever feel superior to all others, shallow ecologists hold the view that nature exists only to serve people and that humans are rightfully considered lords of the natural world. In order to ensure a sustainable future, it also promotes the methodical use of resources like as coal, gas, forests, oil, etc. However, deep ecology questions this style of conservation and instead promotes the idea of preserving nature in its natural state, unaltered by humans, since nature deserves to live. Nobody is superior to another living thing, and every living thing on Earth has inherent worth. When this is fully understood, all living things that contribute to ecological harmony will have the same rights. Ecocriticism places a premium on this eco-awareness that eradicates man's ego-awareness. One byproduct of human society is the current environmental catastrophe. This is not due to natural causes, but rather to human actions and the way we see ethics in relation to the natural world. This knowledge among humans is fostered via ecocriticism.

Literature Review

Alfawareh, Abd Alaziz *et al.* (2023) ^[1]. In fact, the ecological perspective in contemporary English literature around the globe has been dominated by ecocriticism, a new revisionist and reformist movement. The ecological viewpoint developed within the framework of Eco-criticism outlines the nature-human partnership in both positive and negative aspects. Using an Ecocritical lens, this research study seeks to analyze a selection of contemporary English literature written after 1900. This study's literature evaluation draws on the work of renowned writers whose works are notable for their ecologically grounded perspectives. Through an examination of significant literature, it has been determined that the current trend in Ecocriticism moves from the following stages: "nature- a mystic substance," "nature's interconnectedness to action," the significance of preserving nature, "eco-consciousness and eco-literacy about environmental issues," and lastly, demands for action.

Meeran, Dr. J. Ahamed. (2020) ^[2]. In recent years, ecocriticism-an interdisciplinary field that analyzes literature in connection to environmental issues-has grown in stature within the field of literary studies. This study explores the environmental themes prevalent in literary works from different time periods, looking closely at how various authors portray nature, human connection to the environment, and ecological issues. Ecocriticism is an aesthetic critical theory that examines literature for its handling of ecological degradation, sustainability, and natural ethics in addition to its aesthetic merits. Anthropocene, climate change, and ecological collapse

themes are more prevalent in contemporary writing, but classic literature often personifies nature, depicting it as an uncontrollable force. This research delves at a variety of works, from modern eco-fiction that tackles environmental issues to pastoral images in Romantic poetry. This study traces the development of eco-awareness in literature, demonstrating how stories have both affected and been affected by nature, and how this has had an impact on how people see sustainability and their own personal environmental responsibilities. In the end, ecocriticism provides helpful information on how literature might promote environmental consciousness and take action to solve critical environmental problems.

Reddy, A. (2024) ^[3]. In modern English literature, ecocriticism has emerged as a prominent multidisciplinary paradigm for investigating how environmental issues connect with literature. This presentation explores the history and influence of eco-criticism, with a particular emphasis on the ways in which environment is used as a powerful story element in contemporary literature. The research emphasizes the symbiotic link between people and the environment by evaluating major texts and highlighting the move from anthropocentric storytelling to tales that foreground ecological viewpoints. By delving into topics like ecological justice, climate change, and environmental degradation, this study reveals how writers use literary methods to call out unsustainable activities and promote sustainable ones. At the heart of this investigation is the realization that nature is more than just a setting; it actively influences storylines, character development, and theme frameworks. The survey highlights the growing number of people who hold eco-centric worldviews, who believe that the power of nature forces us to rethink our role in the biosphere and threatens established power structures. In addition, the study discusses the function of eco-criticism that is postcolonial or feminist, which provides complex interpretations of literary works by analyzing how social and ecological oppression connect. This study sheds light on eco-criticism's ability to inspire cultural and ethical shifts by placing it within the larger framework of global environmental discourse.

Mishra, Sandip. (2016) ^[4]. Environmental issues have become more problematic in recent decades, endangering both human civilization and Mother Earth. Due to the massive depletion of natural resources, we are on the verge of disaster. Deforestation, dwindling fossil fuel reserves, a skewed seasonal pattern, an increase in the frequency of natural disasters, and a generally unhealthy state of our planet are all contributing factors. Ecocriticism, a new way of interpreting works about nature, emerged in the latter decade of the past century in response to these issues. In response to man's anthropocentric view of himself as master of the natural world, this new movement has emerged on a global scale. This paper's overarching goal is to investigate ecocritical viewpoints as they appear in a selection of works from across the globe and from Indian writers working in English. By focusing on literature with an ecological focus, we may teach readers to be more ecologically aware and, in turn, better stewards of our planet. Since its inception, ecocriticism has grown quickly in response to environmental problems, which are among the most pressing issues of our day. Commonly linked with

environmental critique, it is an analytical instrument for nature writing.

Sikuku, Martin. (2024) ^[5]. Ecocriticism and environmental consciousness in contemporary African poetry were the foci of this research. Procedures and Materials: A desk technique was used in this investigation. Secondary data collecting is a research strategy often used in desk studies. Gathering information from preexisting sources is essentially what this is all about, and it's preferred over field research due to the cost savings. Since the data was readily available via online journals and libraries, our present investigation relied on previously published studies and publications. According to the research, poets strive to get people to care about the environment by showing both the positive and negative effects of human activities on natural settings. Poems written from an ecocritical perspective often use symbols and images to highlight the critical nature of the issues at hand, such as pollution, climate change, and preservation efforts. Poets of the contemporary day reflect the environmental concerns of our day and encourage readers to think about and do something about them by the way they combine aesthetic appreciation with ecological awareness. This rising tide highlights the critical function of literature in illuminating environmental issues and inspiring a greater societal shift towards eco-friendliness. Future research on evaluating ecocriticism and environmental consciousness in contemporary African poetry may be grounded on theories such as ecocritical theory, cultural ecology theory, and reader-response theory.

Relationship Between Natural and Human Environments

When the notion was first being developed, literary works and critics only ever looked at how people interacted with nature. The literary community places a high value on environmental protection and the study of nature writing. The field of ecocriticism analyzes works of literature on environmental issues. As an alternative to over-humanization, it promotes harmonious coexistence between humans and the natural environment. Ecological crises are caused by man's conflicts with nature, but civilization also produces social crises, spiritual crises are caused by conflicts inside individuals, and conflicts between people and themselves.

Currently, the environmental catastrophe is centered on the connection between humans and nature. Much has been said about the environmental catastrophe throughout the last half-century. It is presently a major concern for environmentalists because of the danger it causes to humans, other animals, and the environment. People care a lot more about protecting the environment than they do about upholding the ethical system. In order to save Earth and its inhabitants, we must investigate the ethical practices of individuals, corporations, and governments. Human carelessness is the only ecological threat. The interconnectedness of human actions and the ecosystem make it imperative that we have a thorough comprehension of human value systems in order to influence them in a way that protects the environment.

Along with eco-criticism's explosive rise in recent decades, the discipline has achieved tremendous strides in both breadth and depth, penetrating even the whole literary

canon. Deep ecology, eco-feminism, environmental activism, organic principle and summary, and the awakening of the connection between people and existence are just a few of the ways eco-critics have shown the unity of opposite poles between humans and wildlife up until now, considerably broadening eco-criticism's perspectives. By taking an ecological perspective, eco-criticism analyzes literature and helps shape policies that foster coexistence between humans and their natural surroundings. It has the potential to inspire literary works that reflect a concern for the environment. In addition to bringing attention to environmental issues, it encourages conservation efforts by critiquing cultural practices that disrupt natural harmony.

People engage in environmentally conscious actions when they want to achieve a balance among themselves, their communities, and the natural world. Actually, the ecological crisis is more of a societal one. The ecological crisis, as Max points out, has its roots in socioeconomic difficulties. Because people still don't understand how they fit into the natural world, an ecological disaster is about to happen. When material wealth and comfort are valued in a community, individuals are more likely to exploit the natural world for their own benefit. It leads to a social system that harms Mother Earth. It is possible for the government to rein in irrational acts with the support of a powerful literary work that prompts people to reevaluate the social order. Not only does the ecological disaster impact society and environment, but it also impacts people's morale. Even man's spiritual life is feeling the effects of the social and environmental imbalances. For man to spiritually destroy himself before wreaking havoc on the earth would be the worst possible outcome of his spiritual dilemma.

Ecology and Literature

There are three possible definitions of ecology. According to Haeckelian theory, ecology is the study of how organisms interact with their natural surroundings. The second theory, known as "deep ecology," examines the connection between organizations and their natural surroundings from a philosophical and metaphysical vantage point. Thirdly, oikology (the study of the Oikos) is defined as ecology. Additionally, a few of new fields have evolved, such as human ecology and social ecology. Efforts to link human civilization with natural occurrences are behind the former, while efforts to improve both people and the environment are behind the latter.

According to the Ecocriticism Reader, a fourth definition of ecology is "*The study of the relation between literature and the physical environment*" (Glotfelty xviii). Ecocriticism is "*the environment-oriented study of literature and the arts more generally, and to the theories that underlie such critical practice*" (Buell 138), according to Lawrence Buell's book *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture*.

"*The first wave ecocriticism*" and "*second wave ecocriticism or revisionist ecocriticism*" are the two stages of ecocriticism that he identifies (Buell 138). Genres including "nature writing, nature poetry and wilderness fiction" were the primary targets of the first wave of ecocriticism (Buell 138). Environmental justice and a "*social ecocriticism' that takes urban and degraded landscape just as seriously as 'nature' landscaper*" were hallmarks of the second wave of

ecocriticism (Buell 22). "Environment criticism" is how Buell immediately labels this kind of ecocriticism. Through the lens of this wave of ecocriticism, the thesis examines how literature presents various ecological viewpoints on human and environmental concerns.

The overarching framework of ecocriticism is the relationship between literature and the natural world, with an emphasis on the human condition and its conceptualization and interdependence with other forms of life. In this section, we draw on three postcolonial nations' literary examinations of environment in the 20th century.

A rise in pollution of the land, air, and water, as well as an increase in the loss of natural and wild areas, occurred throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Written with the deft touch of a writer and the scientific acumen of a scientist, *Silent Spring* (1962)^[12] by Rachel Carson exposes the perils of the careless use of chemical biocides and is widely considered the first book of the modern environmental movement. *Mankind and Mother Earth: A Narrative History of the World* (1976) by Arnold Toynbee delves into the environmental catastrophe that had an impact on the planet's biological well-being. Regardless, he draws the conclusion that safeguarding Earth's environment is more difficult than ever before, and that as a result, our world will become uninhabitable in the future.

Ecology

Oikoc is the Greek root word from which we get ecology (ekoloji'). In 1869, the German biologist Ernst Haeckel coined the term ecology. His work on biogenetics is crucial the study of living things and their interactions with their environments is known as ecology. Additionally, it encompasses research on how humans engage with their natural surroundings. *Bionomics* is another name for it. The study of ecology is crucial because even a seemingly little alteration in our natural surroundings may have far-reaching consequences for all forms of life on Earth. We must stop damaging the ecosystem since people don't comprehend ecology. Being more informed is, hence, preferable. In ecology, we learn about the natural world and how it functions. Furthermore, it demonstrates how humans and the natural world are interdependent. Society will be better able to foresee the effects of human actions on the environment if ecological systems are understood.

Discovering the roots of Ecocriticism is crucial for grasping its breadth. "Application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature" is how William Rueckert described ecocriticism, as we saw early on. The question "what is ecology?" arises because in this section Rueckert establishes an ecological poetics by incorporating ecological ideas into literature. The Greek words "Oikos" meaning reflection and "Logos" meaning study are the origins of the term ecology. Thus, ecology is the study of how organisms interact with their natural surroundings from a scientific perspective. Ecology is defined as follows by Webster's New World Dictionary: 1. The scientific study of the interactions between organisms and their natural surroundings. 2. the web of interactions between an individual living being and its natural habitat

Ecology, in its broadest sense, is the study of the relationship between inanimate objects (the environment) and living things (animals and plants). "Ecology is the

science that studies the relationships between living organism (biotic component) and their physical environment (abiotic component)" said Jelica Tosic, who provided a definition of ecology. In a nutshell, the word ecology pertains to the relationship between an organism and its natural surroundings. Earth science, geography, and biology are all part of this multidisciplinary discipline.

Additionally, ecology is a field that studies human behavior and the environment. The field of ecology has several real-world applications, including conservation biology, managing wetlands, natural resources, urban planning, community health, human ecology, and many more. The modern definition of ecology is expanding to include all forms of life in the cosmos. Ecology is all about the connections, exchanges, and conversations between all living things. Along with environment, culture, and civilization are all part of ecology.

Animals, flora, and air quality are only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the worldwide connections between humans and the natural world. As a matter of ultimate consequence for all sentient beings on Earth, it embodies a universal fascination. Thus, we have ecofeminism, eco-spirituality, eco-justice, etc. Recognizing that ecology seeks to highlight the ties that bind cultural and natural organisms is crucial. Additionally, ecologists work to protect all of God's created things, including the sky, land, plants, animals, and humans.

Deep Ecology

Environmentalists who practice deep ecology believe in the inherent worth of all forms of life. It contends that all living things should be valued for what they are rather than for how useful they are to humans. It exemplifies the delicate equilibrium of intricate interrelationships seen in the natural world, wherein the survival of one creature is dependent on that of other organisms within the ecosystem. The Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess first used the term "deep ecology" in 1973. Naess argues that humans need to adopt a way of connecting with one another that involves extending empathy to the point where they no longer see a need to distinguish between themselves and the rest of the world (Naess&Session:2). George Sessions, Bill Devall, and deep ecologists Arne Naess have all adopted a conceptual stance in their environmental philosophy.

All living forms are fundamentally interdependent on the natural world, according to deep ecology. It proves that humans have become exploitative of nature because of anthropocentric thinking. "Deep ecology" means "looking more deeply into the actual reality of humanity's relationship with the natural world," which is meaning that the study will go into intricate details. Because it protects natural resources for future human use, the deep ecological movement rejects anthropocentric environmentalism.

According to proponents of deep ecology, "biocentric equality" establishes that all forms of life in the biosphere are fundamentally equal. It anticipates that one will come to the knowledge that they are hurting themselves if they damage the rest of nature. That various organisms are essential to human survival is the basic spiritual principle of deep ecology. Proponents of deep ecology hold the view that the earth is not a resource that people should feel free to plunder. Any component's ability to persist depends on the

health of the whole, according to the tenets of deep ecology. To clarify the ideas behind this concept, Gary Syder and Arne Naess put forth eight-tiered frameworks:

1. The well-being and success of all forms of life on Earth are valuable in and of themselves; these values are interrelated with how the non-human world might serve human needs.
2. The abundance and variety of living forms not only help us understand these values, but they are also valuable in and of themselves.
3. Unless it's to meet essential human requirements, humans have no business reducing this variety and abundance.
4. It is possible for human life and culture to thrive when the human population decreases significantly. This decline is necessary for the flourishing of animal life.
5. The nonhuman world is now experiencing an overwhelming amount of human interference, and the situation is quickly becoming worse.
6. The fundamental economic, technical, and ideological frameworks are impacted by policies, which need policy changes.
7. Rather than focusing on achieving an ever-higher level of living, the ideological shift is primarily about valuing life quality, or being in situations with intrinsic worth. The distinction between great and huge will be clearly understood.
8. Those involved in the preceding points are indirectly or directly obligated to make an effort to put the required adjustments into action.

Literary Ecology

The field of environmental literature began to sprout in the 1990s, having been established in the mid-1980s. The relationship between writers' works and the real world is a common theme in literary theory. The phrase "*literary ecology*" was first used in Joseph Meeker's magnum opus, *Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology*. Studies of biological themes and their relationships as they manifest in literature are what this term alludes to. The search for the "*ecology of the human species*" is ongoing at the same time. In his study of literature from throughout the globe, Joseph Meeker discovered key distinctions between the comedic and tragic approaches to literary interpretation. The tragic hero myth and legend is uniquely associated with Western culture. As far as human civilization is concerned, comedy was almost ubiquitous. Meeker deftly examines the comedic and sad styles. While the sad style is at odds with the ideas of ecology, he discovers that the comedic mode is the exact opposite. Instead of using a mournful tone, he says, environmentally conscious literature should embrace a comedic one. There is an absolute spiritual, social, and moral order to the cosmos, and the tragic mode acknowledges this. The hero of a tragedy often finds himself at odds with larger moral, societal, or spiritual forces. It is said that the tragic hero is a good guy. He has no choice but to submit to this greater power, yet he proves to be quite resilient in the face of adversity. The tragic hero is superior to all other creatures and holds a loftier position. While ecology rejects the concept of a spiritual or moral hierarchy, the tragic mode nonetheless implies one's place in the grand scheme of things. The field of ecology is founded on the

premise that all living things and inanimate objects on Earth are interdependent, creating vast eco-systems. The ability of an ecosystem to adapt to its surroundings is fundamental to its survival. As we go more into the study of the comedic mode, we see that it closely follows these rules, resulting in a comedy with a happy conclusion. Nobody is killed or severely punished in it. Even the wicked are made to feel better and vice is accepted in comedic works.

In contrast, tragedy mode depicts agony and loss of life. Something harmful to an ecosystem is the lack of compromise and flexibility. The presence of elements of pain in comedic works is not surprising. Comedy often concludes with reconciliation and forgiveness after evil has flourished and virtue has been denied. Ecosystems are therefore analogous to the comic book world's hierarchy. In this context, the primary concern is with maintaining one's own existence. To elucidate this idea, Meeker states that, similar to a creature in an ecosystem, a comic hero accommodates essentiality. The tragic hero, in contrast, seeks ideal or perfection at the expense of or in spite of necessity.

Criticism

Criticism, according to its etymology, comes from the Greek for "*judgment*," and literary criticism is the process of criticizing literary works. Criticism is the mental exercise of analyzing a piece of literature for its merits and shortcomings in order to reach an artistic judgment. Among the many names for eco-criticism are "*Green (cultural) studies*," "*Eco-poetics*," "*Environmental literary criticism*," "*Literary - ecology*," and "*Eco -theory*."

The formal inauguration of ecocriticism was marked by the mid-1990s publishing of two landmark works: "*The Environmental Imagination*" by Lawrence Buell and "*The 77th Eco-criticism Reader: Landmark in Literary Ecology*" edited by Harold Fromm and Cheryll Glotfelty.

Conclusion

In ecocriticism, literature and ecology are two sides of the same coin. It explores how the natural and non-natural worlds interact in literature. Environmental critics use a critical lens to examine how humanity interacts with the environment, which is reflected in cultural, political, and spiritual principles. An eco-critical viewpoint emphasizes the impersonality of this relationship because human life is inextricably linked to the natural environment. Many Indian poems ultimately advocate for a more harmonious cohabitation between humans and the natural world, despite disparities in time, perspective, and tone. When people wish to attain a balance between themselves, their communities, and the natural world, they take environmentally aware acts. Thus, safeguarding the planet's natural resources and ecosystems is a critical issue. The idea that all living creatures and inanimate items on Earth are interrelated and form enormous eco-systems is the foundation of the science of ecology. While ecology rejects the concept of a spiritual or moral hierarchy, the tragic mode nonetheless implies one's place in the grand scheme of things. The field of ecology is founded on the premise that all living things and inanimate objects on Earth are interdependent, creating vast eco-systems.

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