

CHAPTER I

Ecocriticism: A Theoretical Perspective

Human being is a part of the natural world. Scientifically speaking, he is made of various elements: carbon, water, cellular material- therefore, we are all elements found in nature therefore we are part of a nature. In a natural world, everything is interconnected: cycles influence other cycles. Our culture influences the way we see nature, which influences nature itself. It is easy to see how parts of our culture have influenced the world in which we live.

Humans have always been intimately linked with rivers, lakes and wetlands for water, food fiber, medicines and places for habitation. But over-exploitation now means that many of world's fresh water have been radically altered and their ecosystems greatly impoverished. Pollution, habitat loss, excessive water, abstraction, construction of dams, drainage and introduction of invasive non-native species have been some of the unfortunate consequences caused by an array of factors such as urbanization, intensification of agriculture, navigation, flood alleviation and inappropriate aquaculture. Virtually everything that alters the natural hydrological cycle in a river basin affects the behavior, character and therefore the ecology of rivers, lakes and wetlands.

If humans are to aid in the conservation of nature they must understand that every action has a repercussion. Therefore it is very much necessary to take every action into consideration. If humans take any one thing in this world for granted then they start a vicious cycle of repercussions like extinctions of some species, which may lead to the extinction of whole ecosystems, which may lead to the extinction of the human race and the final chapter for this lively planet.

Origin of the word Ecocriticism:

The word ecocriticism is combination of ecology and criticism

Ecology :

The word ecology is originated from Greek word Oecology-eology [ekoloji'] from Greek, oikocs

Credit for coining ecology in 1869 goes to Ernst Hackel a German zoologist. He is founder of biogenetics

Ecology is the branch of biology that deals with the relations of organisms to one another and to physical surroundings. It is also the study of the interaction of people with their environment. It is also called as bionomics.

Studying ecology is very much important, because a simple change in the environment can have a profound effect on all living things; the destruction of one species can mean death of many others. We cannot continue to harm our environment due to poor understanding of ecology. So the more we know the better.

Ecology helps us to understand nature and how it works. It also provides evidence on the interdependence between the natural world and people. Understanding of ecological systems will help society to predict the consequences of human activity on the environment.

Criticism :

Etymologically the word criticism is derived from the Greek word meaning 'judgment' and literary criticism is the exercise of judgment on works of literature. Criticism is play of the mind on a work of literature and its function is to examine its excellences and defects and finally to evaluate its artistic worth.

Eco-criticism is known by a number of other designations such as

“Green (cultural) studies”

“Eco-poetics”

“Environmental literary criticism”

“Literary – ecology”

“Eco – theory”

Ecocriticism was officially heralded by the publication of two seminal works both published in mid 1990s: *The Eco-criticism Reader : Landmark in Literary Ecology* edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm and *The Environmental Imagination* by Lawrence Buell.

Definitions of Ecocriticism

- 1] Cheryll Glotfelty defines “eco-criticism is the study of the relationship between literature and physical environment.
- 2] William Ruckert in his essay “*Literature and Ecology*”: *An Experiment in Eco-criticism* defines eco-criticism as “application of ecology and ecological concepts to study of literature because ecology has greatest relevance to the present and future of world.”
- 3] Eco-criticism is the study of literature and environment from an interdisciplinary point of view where all sciences come together to analyze the environment and brainstorm possible solutions for the correction of the contemporary environmental situation.
- 4] Lawrence Buell defines “ecocriticism ...as a study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis
- 5] It is literary discipline which seeks to examine the intersections of culture, literature and ecology.
- 6] Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship of the human and non-human, throughout human cultural history and entailing critical analysis of the term ‘human’ itself.

Features of Ecocriticism

- 1] Aim of ecocriticism is to synthesize literary criticism and the environmental matters by focusing on the literary analysis of the representations of nature in

literary texts, and the literary constructions of the environmental crisis in eco-literary discourses.

2] Eco-criticism launches a call to literature to connect to issues of today's environmental crisis. In other words eco-criticism is directly concerned with both nature (natural landscape) and the environment (landscape both natural and urban)

3] Eco-criticism mainly concentrates on how literature interacts with and participates in the entire ecosphere.

4] Ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literature and an ecological approach to literary criticism.

5] Ecocriticism examines literature and natural processes which help to interpret our relationships to nature, the natural processes themselves and human conception of 'the natural world'.

6] Ecocriticism seeks to break down barriers and concepts of nature found in culture and replace them with hard data.

7] Ecocriticism seeks not just to save the environment but to change the way we see and interpret the world around us to save the environment in our minds

8] Eco-criticism offers an "analysis of the cultural constructions of nature, which also includes an analysis of language, desire, knowledge and power. so that we are better equipped to save the environment in our backyards.

9] Eco-criticism seeks to study "a multiorganismic concept".

10]] Ecocriticism attempts to find a common ground between human and nonhuman to show how they can coexist in various ways because the environmental issues have become an integral part of our existence. This is one problem that eco-criticism addresses in its attempt to find a more environmentally conscious position in literary studies

11] Ecocriticism uses texts mainly as a way to get at the world itself. Ecocriticism raises some questions what is purpose of literary study? Is

literature a dream dreamed alongside our common reality or is it a symbolic system that trains us for life in the real world?

12] Ecocriticism is most appropriately applied to a work in which the landscape itself is dominant character when a significant interaction occurs between author and place, characters and place. Landscape by definition includes the non-human elements of place-rocks, soil, trees, plants, rivers, animals, air-as well as human perceptions and modifications

13] Eco-criticism studies interconnections between literature and environment

14] Most significant goal of ecocriticism is to identify and analyze 'our own attitudes towards nature and to engender a sense of accountability for the havoc the culture's left hand wreaks on its right hand through shortsighted technological practices

Environmental Literary Criticism

Today more and more young academics respond to the global environmental crisis by turning to the new field of literary ecology. Ecological investigations and interpretations of the relationship between nature and culture inevitably lead to an ecologically oriented critical approach. New eco-theory responds to the global ecological crisis and addresses important environmental issues, specifically by examining values in literary texts with deep ecological implications. Global ecological crisis cannot be overlooked in literary studies. It makes literary scholars to think on the important role literature and criticism play in understanding man's position in the ecosphere

Many preservationists invoked ecological principles to save wilderness. William Howarth discusses ethical principles which aroused a sense of conscience about pesticides that poison ground water and destroy biodiversity. There should be contextualization of ecological themes in literature such as environmental pollution extinction of the species, deforestation, toxic waste contamination and destruction of tropical rain forests.

By examining the language and metaphors used to describe nature, ecocriticism investigates the terms by which we relate to nature. Ecocritic presupposes that human culture specifically its literature is connected to the physical world, affecting nature and nature affects culture. The important influence of literature on our conception of nature is made clear by Roderick Nash who argues in *'Wilderness and American Mind'* that 'civilization created wilderness.' As a cultural product itself, literature reveals the human relationship to the natural world, not only exposing conventional attitudes but also providing alternative models for conceptualizing nature and its relation to human society. Beneath all ecocriticism, however is an environmental awareness of the overwhelming effect of human activity on all aspects of the environment.

As Bill Mckibben argues in his critical essay *'The End of Nature'*, 'for the first time in history human beings [have] become so large that they [have] altered everything around us. That we [have] ended nature as an independent force, that our appetites and habits and desires[can] now be read in every cubic meter of air, in every increment of thermometer'.

According to Grumbling if we consider the environment as a subtext submerged in setting one can infuse discussions of environmental concerns into most literature courses. He gives example of Huck Finn in which one may explore the consequences of the steamboat, not only for Huck's journey, but for the other species and ask how the reader feels about that obviously doomed future. Literature is treated as a kind of means, an instrument of moral instruction. A text can usefully be "borrowed" by instructors in other genres can be treated not as the larger expression it is meant to be, but as an ice breaker, a way to get students talking about certain non-literary concepts. This is no different from using films in order to study fashions or gender relations

Environmental historians and ecocritics combine literary and historical criticism of texts about nature. Ecocriticism focuses on literary (and artistic) expression

of human experience primarily in a nature and consequently, in a culturally shaped world: the joys of abundance, sorrows of deprivation, hope for harmonious existence, and fears of loss and disaster

Cheryll Glotfelty, co-editor of a widely used introductory textbook, *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996) maps, the methods of ecocriticism. In “*Literary Studies in an Age of Environmental Crisis*” she notes that ecocriticism asks wide-ranging set of questions and she insists ‘all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting its interconnectedness between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature.

Ecocriticism is more accurately described as a form of literary environmentalism. This literary environmentalism applies philosophy and theory to nature-centered literature. Many ecocritical scholars recognize the need for literary criticism to address the pressing environmental issues today. It is important for this to focus our study of literature on texts in which nature plays a dominant role.

Ecocriticism provides a broader grasp than a merely sociological, political, and economical analysis, as it focuses on the environmental foundations of the global economy. Ecocriticism argues that a radical critique of the (post)colonial and of globalization can specifically be found in artistic and literary revisions of the imagination of the environment

Ecocritics

Eco and critic both derive from Greek, ‘Oikos’ and ‘Kritis’ and in tandem they mean “house judge”. William Howarth defines ecocritic as a ‘a person who judges the merits and faults of writing that depict the effects of culture upon nature with a view toward celebrating nature, berating its despoilers, and reversing their harm through political action’. So the Oikos is nature, a place Edward Hoagland calls “our widest home” and the Kritis is an arbiter, of taste

who wants the house kept in good order, no boots or dishes strewn about to ruin the original décor.

Ecocritics examine the textualizations of physical environment in literary discourse itself, and to develop an earth-centered approach to literary studies.

William Howarth

William Howarth discusses about responsible principle derived from four disciplines: ecology, ethics, language and criticism. As an interdisciplinary science ecology describes the relations between nature and culture. The applied philosophy of ethics offers ways to mediate historic social conflicts. Language theory examines how words represent human and nonhuman life. Criticism judges the quality and integrity of works and promotes their dissemination. As a vernacular science, ecology was widely adopted by many disciplines to read, interpret and narrate land history. Several ecologists wrote histories of regional land-use linking biogeography to agronomy and sociology to examine natural and cultural interaction.

According to William Howarth there is close relationship between ecology and ethics. Ecology is a science strongly connected to a history of verbal expression. In the medicine rites of early people, shamans sang, chanted and danced stories to heal disease or prevent disaster, which they saw as states of disharmony or imbalance in nature. Ancient science was dyadic because it portrayed nature as a composite, formed of opposite elements.

According to William Howarth connecting science and literature is difficult for their cultures have grown widely apart. Nature is known through images and words, a process that makes the question of truth in science or literature inescapable, and whether we find validity through data or metaphor, two modes of analysis are parallel. Ecocriticism observes in nature and culture the ubiquity of signs, indicators of value that shape form and meaning. Ecology leads us to recognize that life speaks, communing through encoded streams of information

that have direction and purpose if we learn to translate the message with fidelity. William Howarth argues all writers and their critics are stuck with language and although we cast nature and culture are opposites, in fact they constantly mingle, like water and soil in flowing stream. It suggests that humanity may have to find a middle ground between nature and culture. Culture needs to be recast to sustain life on earth. Some ecologists believe that humans will never be able to sustain the earth.

Cheryll Glotfelty

Cheryll Glotfelty gives preliminary definition of ecocriticism “ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature physical environment.”

She then offers an array of sample questions that might suggest the kinds of inquiries that ecocritics might venturing such as “How then can we contribute to environmental restoration from within our capacity as professors of literature?, “how is nature represented in this sonnet [Literature]?” or: “Are the values in this play [Literature] consistent with ecological wisdom?” or: “In what ways has literacy itself affected humankind’s relationship to the natural world?”

Glotfelty tries to give a basic armature –a tripartite scheme of developmental stages. The first reflects a concern with “representations”—how nature is represented in literature. Second, there is the re-discovery and reconsideration of antecedent works – the claiming of a heritage. And finally Glotfelty proposes a theoretical phase, for examining “the symbolic construction of species. How has literary discourse defined the human?”

According to Glotfelty there is crucial terminological confusion in ecocritics. The terms “nature” and “environment” are so often used interchangeably that they have become near synonyms. But they are not synonyms. “Environment is a capacious term and refers to the whole of the surroundings scape, whether natural, urban or something mixed. ‘Nature’ is the

original given: it is the environmental before the transformations wrought by technology.

William Ruckert

William Ruckert defines ecocriticism as application of ecology and ecological concepts to study of literature because ecology has greatest relevance to the present and future of world. In this context the possible relations between literature and nature are examined in terms of ecological concepts.

William Ruckert produces a new conceptualization while arguing about the importance of “literary ecology”. The conceptual and practical problem is to find ground upon which the two communities—the human, the natural can coexist, cooperate and flourish in the biosphere. Conceptualization is necessary in understanding the connections between reading literary texts and the science of ecology itself. Ecocriticism helps to establish relationships or connections between literary and ecological texts.

Timothy Morton

Timothy Morton in his “*Ecology without Nature*” admonishes “putting something called nature on a pedestal and admiring it from a far for the environment what patriarchy does for the figure of woman”. He argues that the chief stumbling block to environmental thinking is the image of nature itself. Ecological writers propose a new worldview, but their very zeal to preserve the natural world leads them away from the “nature” they revere.

In “*The Ecological Thought*” he asserts “the very idea of nature will have to wither away in an ecological state of human society”. Morton traces how the rise of environmental art coincides with the emergence of global capitalism where consumerism is not an active state of being. He says “one doesn’t eat just carrots one styles oneself as a carrot eater”. This connects up

with modern attitudes of environment where environments were caught in the logic of romantic consumerism.

In the first chapter of "*The Ecological Thought*" he has given message 'Think Big'. Morton foregrounds two key concepts: 'the mesh' and 'strange stranger'. Mesh is subtle signifier than web i.e. network. It means the interconnectedness of living and non-living things, while capturing both holes with a network and threads of interconnectedness between them, while nevertheless maintaining a sublime dimension: "the strange stranger."

In chapter 2 '*Dark Thought*' Morton explores a melancholy bond with nature in keeping with the imagery of 'darkness' over the utopian or 'bright' thinking of the green movement. Dark ecology is an ironic, contemplative and uncertain attunement to the shadowy world of nature. Morton gives example of an allegory through genre of film 'noir' where narrator's descriptive neutrality gives way to an indictment that is tainted with desire. Nature as a 'strange stranger' is thus the limit of imagination, a sort of uncanniness that haunts any empirical, sensory aesthetic, or perception or sensation of our connections with nature.

Morton's thought are pervasive. He gives ecological thought that is 'a practice and a process of becoming fully aware of how humans being are connected with other being-animal, or mineral. Morton emphasizes on rationalistic understanding of the relationship between political activity and ecology in his claim "if we see nature correctly then we will act appropriately".

Michael J. McDowell

According to Michael J. McDowell ecocritic should not work as "ecopolice" who will ask whether literature contributes "to our survival" or to "our extinction". He observes ecocritics tend to condemn western civilization for its oppression of nature and seeking answers in Eastern thought. He objects this and expects to recognize what is valuable in western literature and literary

tradition. Another observation is that ecocritics tend to discover eternal themes and recurring characters in the literature.

Mcdowell draws attention towards some important facts in application of ecological literary criticism. It is important to know the way a writer uses metaphors reveal about his or her representations of landscape. Second important thing is that modification of genres and modes, “such as pastoralism to incorporate an understanding of the complex relationships within nature. It should be also given attention what methods are used by nature writers “to enable a dialogic interplay of voices and values in contradiction to each other and to each writer’s own views.

Mcdowell suggests that the study of nature and character in interaction is a method of useful application. Accordingly, studying dialogic voices in a landscape would enable the critic to analyze the values attributed to nature. Such an analysis “might begin by looking at the roles which the narrator or point-of-view character plays in the landscape”. The last concern of practical ecocriticism is assessing “the limits of each writer’s view.”

Sven Birkerts

According to Sven Birkerts ecocriticism appears to be dominantly concerned with nature to be fair. Nature and its preservation is what occupy most of ecocritics. And this imposes a kind of programmatic simplicity upon the whole movement. Birkerts says that fascism is bad which must be opposed. The destruction of nature is also bad which must be opposed. The message should go out to those who need to hear it, but academic discourse is the least moveable of feasts.

Sven Berkerts asserts that literature cannot and should not be used as a pretext for examining man and nature. There should not be politization of literature. He says that literature may be about the world but not in simple correspondence sense that people often imagine. Works of Wordsworth,

Thoreau and its settings appear linked to actual places, are not finally transcriptions of setting. They are independent creations of the world: they are language in the mind. Ecocritics too very often make mistake of conflating world and mind, thing and symbol. It is a critical error

Sven Birkerts discusses about idea of “nature”. He asks what do we mean really, when we invoke that most commonplace noun? Through the word nature we refer to the natural world at large or some part of it. We intend land vegetation, waterways, living creatures and the ecosystem that allows them all to flourish. But we also assume something else. For nature we suppose “what is”. “Nature” is ground of all reference, the origin and end of all organic existence. This is problem in which ecocriticism tends to isolate, or focus upon nature as phenomenon and while it does not ignore the underlying process, or the even more basic ontology, it has its aim the foregrounding of what has always been the all-embracing basis of being. The ground cannot be foregrounded. Be natural, be like nature. In other words without self-consciousness, be without too much reflection, just be. By focusing on nature, by bringing it forth as an object for attention and analysis, ecocriticism makes nature, in effect, unnatural.

Sven Berkerts says we can't insist upon this separation –about keeping Church and State apart because nothing could be more important than the survival of our natural world and its ecosystems and literature must address the state of things in some meaningful way. Literature and all that depends on it must continue to be about what it is in us humans that has brought the crisis about confrontations of evidence of our destructive and the likelihood of a severely diminished future. Moving the focus anywhere away from the psyche, the soul ultimately depreciates the art and hobbles it from doing what it does best. We do want to save nature, but we don't need to kill literature in our zeal to do so.

Vernon O. Grumbling

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Ecocriticism is still inventing in what specific ways the awareness of nature will be brought into the field of literary study. We can glean a few clues from “*Greening the College Curriculum : A Guide to Environmental Teaching in the Liberal Arts*,” edited by Jonathan Collet and Stephen Karkashian. In the “Literature” chapter, written by Vernon Owen Grumbling, the subject is introduced thus:

Because literature works through value-laden images and offers itself to the interpretation of the reader, particular value is to personalize the moral aesthetic issues that inevitably arise in exploring conservation of biodiversity and sustainable development.’ Those teaching in disciplines other than literature can easily “borrow” a particular literary text as a means of stimulating students to respond in personal terms to the environment consequences of attitudes and behaviours. Conversely, the fusion of environmental awareness into the study of literature often results in unusually lively discussion. Sometimes its students even develop an abiding affection for literature itself.

Dana Philip

According to Dana Philip when we look at literature we try to analyze things we relate it in the modernist view by relating in time and place. The harder we try to preserve and interact with it, the further we separate ourselves from nature. The forest has not changed, while the human’s feelings about trees a human’s interactions with trees and forests have changed. The modern human

generation saw nature as a surrounding, while the post modern human generation sees nature as a product by natural resources. Our perspective has changed, therefore, our experiences changes.

Barry commoner's gives law of ecology '[E]very thing is connected to everything else.' It defines reality as "an undivided wholeness' The separation of the world into an 'objective outside reality and 'us' the self-conscious onlookers can no longer be maintained. It is said that "the origin of our dilemma lies in our tendency to create abstractions of separate objects, including a separate self and then to believe that they belong to an objective independently existing reality.

Ecology found its voice by studying the properties of species, their distribution across space and their adoptive course in time. In tracing those relations, ecology often used metaphors. Water is the sculptor of landscapes, life is patchy, ecosystem build linking chains or webs. The critic's job is to follow the metaphors, images or motifs that govern a text seeing if they render unimportant any ecological issue.

Neil Evernden in '*Beyond Ecology : Self, Place and Pathetic Fallacy*' says that it is very much important to make conversation with conservation. We should not suppose ourselves for temporal period in nature. It makes like a tourist. We must become the resident foe, 'to the tourist, the landscape is merely a facade, but to the resident it is 'the outcome of how it got there and the outside of what goes on inside.' The resident is, in short, a part of the place.' By becoming the resident in this entity of nature, we become a part of the entity itself. The residence in nature presents humanity with a better picture of their actions. Heightened awareness creates a need for heightened conservation and progressive actions

Scott Slovic has pointed out in his essay on ecocriticism in '*The Green Studies Reader*' [2000] 'ecocriticism has no central dominant doctrine- rather ecocritical theory is being redefined daily by the actual practice of

thousands of literary scholars around the world. Ecocriticism like the other contemporary theories of literature, needs its own solid systematic theoretical ground if it wants to offer informed discussions because according to Arran E. Gave 'theories are ways of experiencing the world, conceptual frameworks in terms of which the world is interpreted and made sense of.' In other words theories are ways of formulating meaning making processes and they help to develop critical perspectives of how our discourses construct our realities, how language affects meaning making and how meanings get contested within particular discourses. It is important to note that ecological discourses combine ecological and textual diversity, and richness of meaning. For this reason their meaning resist being totalizable. For example Linda Hogan's '*Solar Storms*' [1995], Leslie Marmon Silko's '*Ceremony*' [1977] as some of the typical environmental texts. They are fashioned to create a reality effect but they also contain a multitude of cultural, ecological meanings. To restrict this richness of meaning only with referential readings would be a failure to pay due homage to them. Therefore studying environmental literature from a more stimulating perspective of ecological conception of textuality would reveal that all texts are 'complex fabric of signs'. Theoretical investigations of both environmental and literary texts would reveal that 'neither texts nor biotic communities are closed systems.

Ecology and Culture

Literature can be perceived as an aesthetically and culturally constructed part of environment, since it directly addresses the questions of human constructions, such as meaning value, language and imagination. It can be linked to the problem of ecological consciousness that human need to attain. Within this framework eco-critics are mainly concerned with how literature transmits certain values contributing to ecological thinking.

It is important to note that literature should not be used as a pretext for examining the ecological issues. In other words the task of putting literature in question in order to save nature implies a reductionist approach. Since post-structuralist theory “has sharpened the focus on textual and inter-textual issues.” The eco-critical reader cannot go back into perceiving literary texts as transparent mediums that un-problematically reflect phenomenal reality. Therefore the true concern of eco-criticism ought not to be with absolute representational models but with how nature gets textualized in literary text to create an eco literary discourse that would help to produce an inter-textual as well as an inter active approach between literary language and language of nature.

Ecology studies the relations between species and habitats, ecocriticism must see its complicity in what it attacks. Nature and culture constantly mingle like water and soil in a flowing stream. Ecology appeared when naturalists began to write about the detrimental impact of mass societies. Literary ecology is a projection of human ideas about human responsibility into the natural environment

From literary standpoint eco-criticism needs a more inclusive and interdisciplinary approach. In fact any inquiry into ecological matters in literary theory necessitates the need for theoretical and critical specificity. First to reform present perceptions and approaches in critical theory requires a considerable expansion of the theoretical systems and second if critical focus becomes specific to particular forms of writing such as nature poetry or fiction then critical lenses must be widened in their analysis. If other forms of writing are to be included in the eco-critical examination, the considerable effort must be expended in their study in terms of how they approach ecological matters.

Verbal construction of nature lead to a binary way of thinking that justifies the present castraphobic abuse of nature. This is logo centric approach. To

counter this approach eco-criticism embarks upon the project of reconceptualizing nature, as an active agency in its own right.

Eco-critics like Donna Haraway, Diana Fuss, Patrick Murphy and Evelyn Fox Keller urge for a reconception of nature as an active and speaking subject. But, as H. D. effectively voices it in her poem "Late spring" we cannot really enter into the realm of Earth's life forms without making any constructions. The language of nature always speaks through human discourses as H. D.'s poem expresses.

A dialogue with nature is not possible in linguistic terms, but constructing a new mode of understanding and perception that surpasses, if not eliminates, nature/culture dichotomy is an eco-critical attempt to deconstruct the privileged human subjectivity in its dialogue with language of nature might create a sustainable ecological vision in the reading and writing of literature. Eco-criticism advocates a rethinking of our commonly held beliefs and perceptions and our versions of nature towards creating a 'Consciousness of the essential unity of all life.'

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There should be contextualization of ecological themes in literature such as environmental pollution extinction of the species, deforestation, toxic waste contamination and destruction of tropical rain forests. It would lead to more and more analysis of ecologically informal criticism.

The adoption of ecological concepts to the critical terminology is an enhancing process towards developing a more comprehensive perspective in the literary field. The application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature has the greatest relevance to the present and future of the world we live in.

Ecocriticism does not take the natural world as its core subject, but looks instead to man, the most problematic denizen. The true concern, finally ought not to be with nature and its representations, but with the human being and whatever it is in nature that has led us into crisis. In other words, ecocriticism might want to re-christen itself ego-criticism and explore what literature has to say about human, its avariciousness, rapacity, the will to power.

Middlebury Elder says a econcentric and bioregional approach is important because world is dense fabric of interdependencies and the proper study of literature is ostensibly about the world. It ought to be interdisciplinary. But there is misunderstanding that literature should insist upon cross-pollinating it with more worldly matters.

Ecocriticism is new, still finding its feet, but it offers a broad vision of life and our place in nature. It could help you out of the bind you are in now, caught inside a self-enclosed definition of culture that only mirrors your own abnoxious little self-regarding angst-ridden egomaniacal crypto-smugness.

Culture is a refuge from life in nature, not a part of it. In ecocriticism positions reveal themselves as persons. Voice ecocriticism is as if nature is speaking to culture. According to William Howarth connecting science and literature is difficult for their cultures have grown widely apart. Nature is known through images and words, a process that makes the question of truth in science or literature inescapable, and whether we find validity through data or metaphor, two modes of analysis are parallel. Ecocriticism observes in nature and culture the ubiquity of signs, indicators of value that shape form and meaning. Ecology leads us to recognize that life speaks, communing through encoded streams of information that have direction and purpose if we learn to translate the message with fidelity.

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wide-ranging set of questions and she insists 'all ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting its interconnectedness between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of language and literature.

Humans construct a culture that keeps them comfortable. However this 'comfortable life amidst the conveniences of technology has caused them to suffer a spiritual death. It is necessary for the spiritual lives of people to make physical life endurable.

William Cronon in his essay '*The Trouble with Wilderness: Getting Back to the Wrong Nature*' points out wilderness suddenly emerged as the landscape of choice for elite tourists, who brought with them strikingly urban ideas of the countryside through which they traveled. For them wild land was not a site for productive labor and not a permanent home rather it was a place of recreation. If humans continue to define nature as the place where humans do not dwell, then there is no room for humans to join in the natural experiences.

All writers and their critics are stuck with language and although we cast nature and culture as opposites, in fact they constantly mingle, like water and soil in a flowing stream. It suggests that humanity may have to find a middle ground between nature and culture. Culture needs to be recast to sustain life on earth. Some ecologists believe that humans will never be able to sustain the earth. Some of these ecologists feel that 'if we can't know everything, if we can't control the effects of our actions, if even the smallest human interference can cause massive natural destruction, then the only way to keep something important is to preserve it. Ecologists suggest a way to solve the problem of nature's deterioration and decay is to destroy it. Some deep ecologists feel that solving the problem is driving a sport utility vehicle and poisoning the air we breathe. It is an important lesson by ecology that it is important to preserve

significant biodiversity when human population is increasing and disrupting ecological systems.

The diversity of ecocritical practice stresses that such criticism should not focus just on trees and rivers that inhabit texts but also should focus on the 'nature inherent in humans and in settings in which human figure prominently: in dooryards, cities, and in farms'.

Definition of land by Aldo Leopold in his essay "*The Land Ethic*" is holistic definition which includes not only non-human elements- both organic and inorganic- but also humans, their perceptions, and their modifications of the landscape.

Ecological crisis is world wide spread. In a world much burdened with the wide spread ecological crisis, the emergence of ecocriticism in the academy had signaled a new and a promising hermeneutical horizon in our interpretations and understanding of the natural world. Ecocriticism is being discussed on the theoretical grounds. Ecocriticism today is facing an ambivalent openness in its interpretative approach. This is due to the fact that interpretative approach enables ecocriticism to be an open field of inquiry. They ignore the conceptual problems the realist perspectives conjure. Those who promote 'a realist variety of ecocriticism, fails to understand that no interpretative theory can be conceived of without language occupying its center.

The ecocritics endeavoured to bridge the gap between literature and the environment. They espoused literary realism as their method of analysis. In this context Glen A. Love argues that 'the most important function of literature today is to redirect human consciousness to the full consideration of its place in a threatened natural world. Ecocritics formulated 'an ecological poetics.' This gave birth to theoretical problems. Some prominent critics have emphasized the promoting a biocentric worldview through ecocriticism and announced a call for cultural change. Ecocriticism implies a move toward a mere biocentric worldview, an extension of ethics, a broadening of humans' conception of

global community to include nonhuman life forms and the physical environment.

According to Michael P. Cohen ecocriticism must question more closely the nature of environmental narrative not simply praise it. Critics find expression in the referential mode of ecocriticism. They give overemphasis on the literary representations of environment. It produces a misconceived notion of how environmental representations functions, for it mistake words with things. In his influential book *'The Environmental Imagination'* [1995] Lawrence Buell called for a revival of the representational properties of literature. He argued for the importance of investigating 'literature's capacity for articulating the non-human environment.' In his book *'The Ecocritical Insurgency'* Buell praises ecocritics such as Howarth and Love who attempts to 'redirect attention towards literature's engagement with the physical environment'.

Buell posits that 'environmental interpretation requires us to rethink our assumptions about the nature of representations' and advocates a return to the mimetic tradition of referentiality in literature. Premises of mimetic theories are taken into consideration for critical practice in ecocriticism. The mimetic tradition of criticism is founded upon the assumption of 'referentiality of literary meaning'. According to this assumption representations of nature in environmental literature and especially in nature writing, are assumed to have a referential accuracy of realistic detail and to be transparent. They are considered to provide an unmediated access to the natural environment itself. Michael Riffaterre calls it a 'referential fallacy'. It is based on the misconception of finding faithful recordings of the natural world in environmental literature and referential meaning in literary texts. This approach disregards accuracy of representation of natural environment in literature. Representations of reality in literature are always already culturally encoded and because they are cognitive constructions. Here poses important question of how adequately any text can

provide a stable access to reality which is always linked to cultural assumptions and to conceptual frameworks which are subject to change. In this connection Gary Lease's comments are important. He says "our many representations of nature and human are always and ultimately failures."

Representations of nature both in environment and traditional literature project an effect of reality but do not merely represent the real material condition of nature. In fact what they do is create a model of reality that fashions our discourses and shapes our cultural attitudes to the natural environment.

The representation of reality is a verbal construct in which meaning is achieved by reference from words to words, not to things. Noting the dangers of reducing all reality into a text David Mazel in his article '*Performing wilderness*' in '*American Literary Environmentalism*' [2000] asks the question 'If 'nature' is 'merely' a text, what about environmental destruction?'

Postmodernism does not deny the existence of reality but reality is already mediated by representation within a set of discourses. According to postmodernism it is meaningless celebration of play of language which disregards everything that is outside it. There is nothing outside the text this approach imprisons nature and practically all reality within an endlessly differentiating play of signifiers. Rebecca Raglon comments that we condemn language as a 'guilty participant' in the environmental destruction. This is a schizophrenic feature of post-structuralism. It suggests there can never be an escape from the prisonhouse of language. Brenda Marshall accurately defines postmodernism- 'It is about language, about how it controls, how it determines meaning and how it tries to exert control through language.' It is an important lesson by ecology that it is important to preserve significant biodiversity when human population is increasing and disrupting ecological systems.

Best ecocritic uses literature as a pretext to study environmental issues and evaluates relevant texts according to their capacity to articulate ecological contexts.

Researcher intends to do literary analysis of the representation of nature and literary constructions of environmental crisis in the novels of Kiran Desai. It aims to study representations of nature and landscapes in her novels '*Hullabaloo in the Guava Orchard*' and '*The Inheritance of Loss*'. Researcher does the study of how she has focused on different environmental crisis, ecological issues. It is necessary to study how human being reacts to nature, their roles towards nature which is given by writer. Ecocritical study of novels helps to establish relationship between literary and ecological texts. It is a modest attempt to unearth the concerns of ecocriticism as well as to explore Kiran Desai's contribution to the awakening of modern man towards conservation and preservation of ecosystem. Through various scenes and landscapes novelist has depicted ecological richness and its interconnectedness with human culture.
