

ECOCRITICISM: VENERATION TO NURTURE NATURE

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Abstract

Ecocriticism is a study of cultural phenomena, which connects to the human world. It makes the universe understand that the human world entirely depends on the natural world. It is an answer to problems, confusions, crisis and questions of the living beings about nature. It is a need for today to comprehend the fact that our relationship with the nature is important. The environmental destruction depends on how we deal with nature. The environmental crisis happening around us is a result of man's detachment from the natural world. Ecocriticism strives hard to bind the scholars and critics, to show the significance of nature to the human world. It is an investigation of the relationship between each other. The purpose of this study is to encourage the readers to gain maturity and to understand the process of harmony with nature. It analyses and teaches how the individuals and the body of society should teach way of living akin to nature. It paves way for the people to understand their importance of staying connected to the ecological world. The various theories of ecocriticism widens human knowledge and guides them to bring a shape to their exploration of literary texts connected to nature.

Keywords: *Ecocriticism, three disciplines, web of nature, ecosustainability, ecojustice.*

Of all the theories, Ecocriticism is an emerging theory that emphasizes environmental concerns and explores varied methods literature act towards nature. It is different from other theories as it fits into the green world today. Hence, it can be named Green theory. This theory analyses the connection between texts and the natural environment. The name "Ecocriticism" hails from the essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism" published by William Rueckert in the year 1978. Cheryll Glotfelty, a graduate student at Cornele, who was an Assistant Professor in literature and the environment at the University of Nevada, coined the name Ecocriticism. Prof.Glen publicised it to the people in his speech "Revaluating Nature: Toward an Ecological Literary Criticism". This term was finalised in a meeting in 1989. This term or study is widely spread in the world today. Cheryll.G Glotfelty exhibits how ecocriticism plays a pivotal role in spreading the concept of the universal environmental crisis. The attempt of the ecocritics with diverse background, braids together forming the strong green thread called Ecocriticism. Nirmal Selvamoy in Essays in Ecocriticism defines ecology as a deep study of the connectivity between both the living organism and the environment. Ecocriticism evolves from ecology. Therefore, the concept couples environment and the texts. The principles of ecocriticism is derived from four disciplines namely ecology, ethics, language and criticism. These four disciplines when bound together explore new

methods in environmental literature. William Howarth in his "Some Principles of Ecocriticism describes it as an "interdisciplinary ... dissemination" (Howarth 71). These disciplines individually emphasises the connectivity of nature and literature. It is a form of activism trying to bring an intense awareness in today's scenario. Barry Commoner says in "The Closing Circle", "Any living thing that hopes to live on earth must fit in to ecosphere or perish." (5 Commoner). A new study "The Ecology of Language" is defined as a "the study of interactions between any given language and its environment. (Haugen 57).

The proposed paper involves three disciplines 'Deep Ecology', 'Oikopoetics' and 'Social Ecology'. They are the fundamental principles of the earth apart from human, nature, environment and place. They play a primary role in the physical and mental environment. It is an attempt to make the human world to understand their role in the globe of nature. They help the readers to study and bring out the ecological perspective in the texts.

Deep ecology is the relation between the human world and living world. The study of deep ecology teaches the unity of nature with man. Its aim is to let the world know that nature is a 'part' of human and not 'apart' from human. The world would be a better place to live if this concept is understood by the mankind. Deep ecology is pondering more on our thoughts, feelings and actions towards the universe. It teaches us values and methods to preserve

nature and ecological disturbances happening in the ecosystem. The core of the theory is to make the dwellers of the land understand that environment is 'with' and 'within' the humankind. Once this feeling is concreted in our mind, the whole attitude towards the environment changes. The focus of this study is to stir up the minds of the world, to safeguard, respect and give importance to all the biological species belonging to the universe.

The term Oikopoetis or Ecopoetics emerges from the Greek term 'Oikos' meaning 'household' of human, nature and spirits. It comprises of three approaches integrative oikos, hierarchic oikos and anarchic oikos. It focusses on the togetherness of the spirits, humans, nature and culture. This theory stresses the fact that all these phenomena stand in an integrated relationship under one roof. They are interlinked and intertwined with each other.

Integrative oikos is the integrated relationship of human and nature and spirits. They are clustered and stand together leading to the quietness of the society. Hierarchic oikos is the hierarchy of human over nature. It delivers the fact of bringing disaster to the living world. This act of dominance demolishes the natural providence of food, air, water and shelter to the people. Anarchic oikos is violating the laws of nature. Violating causes chaos in the universe. It reveals the reaction of nature over the action of human. Therefore, Oikopoetics is about the understanding and dominance of human over nature and the vice versa, the nature being dominant over man. It instills the unity of human, nature and the spirits. This criticism exerts to apply this concept to the texts. The question lies 'Whether dwellers of the planet are eco-friendly and do they consider nature as an equal partner?'. It poses the integrity of nature with everything prevailing in the living space of man; on the other hand, and voices the destruction and exploitation of nature. It concludes by explaining the unity and diversity of the universal concept of nature.

The discipline of Social ecology is a new concept, which describes the fact of nature being destroyed for the needs of the society. According to Ghua in Social Ecology "it examines such social categories like culture, polity, social structure and economy in their relationship to natural categories like soil, water and forest." (4). The society plays a role in the death of natural elements of the world. Social ecology expresses the selfishness of man, where the rural transforms to urban and the green landscapes turns to the necessity of the human world. This theory echoes the degradation of greenery such as trees, plants, landscapes, and forests. It seeks to evaluate texts and

ideas in terms of coherence and responds to the environmental crisis. It distinguishes the 'problems in ecology' and ecological problems. This theory called Ecocriticism is introduced in many colleges to share the significance of nature to the present and future generations.

There is a difference between nature writing and ecocritical writing. Nature poems and nature centered fiction are analysed and finds a way to fit into any critical approaches. It is new way of interpretation to make the readers respect the environment around. The study provides the readers a better understanding to the definitions of ecocriticism and its theories. Eco critical theories erupt from nature-oriented literatures and ecostudy is raised to a higher level to examine the ecological wisdom and ecological crisis. So, both ecocritical study and eco-study strives to emphasise the primary goal of survival will be disturbed if nature is disturbed.

The surface of the earth is occupied with nature rather than humans. It comprises of flowers, trees, plants, mountains, landscapes and the whole of the universe. Mankind considers earth as sacred till today. There are many inhabitants rooted in the land. The life of human is in the life of the farmers, hunters, fishermen, foresters and botanists. There are tribes across all states of India and every country wishes to remain the same to save their ethics and culture. The basic sources resources such as food, shelter, clothing and manufactures is a nature's gift to man. The benevolence of nature is to be conserved, persevered and to sustain. This goal is a resistance to large-scale structural changes. People should promote the stability of nature, keeping nature far from being 'entropic' which means the necessities of the scientific ecologists. Nature plays a role in all places at all times. Bioregionalism accommodates its own environment but does not to exploit the natural world. Today, human is least compared to nature because it has a "balanced, harmonious, integrative state of maturity, which, once reached, is maintained for prolonged periods." (Howarth 4). There is a recent study of economists that nature calls for a 'steady state' rather than false progress of changes and growth in the universe. Nature wishes to allocate its resources and plans to develop in a safest place in an ecological manner. The government in the society and the nation needs to hold hands together to develop a space for nature and must learn the way of being stable, having control, competence and independence.

In the family of nature, there is no question of domination. Every living species are organized as individuals without the system of authority. It is the fact that no species rules, and even attempts to do so. Instead it shows its assertion of power over its territory, its wish is to be in its territory. Each species in the universe owns an organization. The greater part to be admired is, it knows to balance and adjust, co-operate with each other and to integrate in the environment with complexity and flexibility. The vision of biosphere is to live a way of living that prevents us from calamity, to satisfy the humans with enrichment, providence and to widen the needed sources for the humanity. There is a deep bonding among people and with the surrounding non-human forms. They are interconnected to the web of living in the world. The human and non-humans understands the cycle of nature. There is coherence, respect, non-exploitation and reverence among the four legged, two legged, living creatures and organisms that has life. Nature maintains equilibrium among the living creatures and is friendly to humans. Man sometimes destroys the balance of equilibrium and as a result, the normal process of life is shattered. There lies a fact that the exploitation of nature bombards destructive forces like cyclones, change in seasons, tsunami and rivers, dams and the scorching heat sucks water reservoirs' such as ponds, rivers and dams. Life would be dangerous for any individual in such a scenario. There has to emerge self-consciousness that we, the humans belong to the web of nature. The ecosystem is more complicated than the human organization because it involves the diverse needs and activities of a large number of species.

Human social systems have no choice but to rely on non-humans. For example, man has to keep himself alive to feed on certain domestic animals, plants and fruits. The natural ecosystem is a huge process. It accommodates life within every species but also sets a harmonious relationship among its entire constituent species. For instance, in an old tree, there resides thousand organisms which maintains a chemistry of the stable soil and each organism has got a particular role to play in the process of decomposition. The insects live upon plants and the birds feed upon the bacteria, tiny creatures live breeding in complex vegetation. This cycle of process is astonishing; it starts with ferns, growth of trees and animals. This process builds a setting for all the other living creatures. It provides food and shelter and depends upon the environmental changes in weather and geographical. This is a highly complex community, without which no species and individual can survive. Every species is dependent upon

the completeness of environment as a whole. This happens to be one of the secrets of ecosystem.

Individual living beings and every species cannot live with freedom. They ought to live a dangerous life as they would end up becoming a prey to the other species. In order to keep themselves alive, every tiny organism and species has to meet death as no species can survive without the death of the other individual. No species proves to be dominant but each form a unique foundation that plays a part in the overall stability of the country. In the universe, the human world can survive only if this balance maintains forever.

In the present scenario, humankind does not know what it means to live in a complex ecosystem. Human does not have consciousness of how they survive in the universe. They do not bother to understand the fact that they also play a role in shaping the ecosystem. Human acts as dominant species as competitors to destroy and not to create. They achieve in lending ears to their thoughts not to conserve nature. Man indulges in destroying trees, occupying rivers and ponds to live an easy and sophisticated life. All must eat and turn to be eaten. There is a necessity but at the same time the more we destroy, the more we reap. According to Joseph W. Meeker, injustice must occur and it is all about the design of ecological system and it is the work of the human to accommodate the necessity and to encourage acceptance and tragedy.

The concept of these theories invokes the mankind to understand the social ecological element. They affirms that the society of humanity's dominance over nature results in the environmental crisis. Nature is disturbed for the needs of the people in the society. The ecological predicament is deeply rooted due to the authoritative organization of the society. To satisfy the humans with buildings, to make them to feel at ease to live in the society, the hierarchical organization of humanity demolishes the green world to make the people feel comfortable and to provide the needs for their living. This theory insists the humanity to understand that, the more the nature is destroyed, the more the destruction to human and their needs. The more the cut down of trees; the less the rainfall, the eruption of vast buildings leads to no access with nature, the more the usage of automobiles, the more disturbance in the ozone layer. Therefore, it is an alarm to the people to realize the need of green society for a healthy living.

Ecological sustainability is the current notion of the human world today. We are called to sustain our relationship with nature. Gone are the days where the

living grounds were surrounded with trees, screeching of the birds and wandering of animals. The golden days of living akin to nature, giving due respect and care is no more. Eco-veneration prevailed in the past, 'veneration' means 'profound reverence' and on the contrary, 'catastrophe' is 'a disaster beyond expectations'. Today, ecocatastrophe has taken the place of eco-veneration. Absence of veneration has led to ecocatastrophe today. Nowadays, the humanity is daring enough to destroy nature not knowing the consequences. In the past, trees were worshiped as God but in the present the very same trees are unseen. Every downfall in this world is connected to nature. In the present 21st century, new-found diseases are discovered because of the negligence of natural food. The taste buds crave for unhealthy food that has led to higher death rate. Veneration to nurture the nature is dissolving and so the humanity has to face disasters beyond expectations today. The core of the present article is a call to wake up the sluggish mind of the people to sense the catastrophe encircling the globe today. The world is striving to safeguard the surviving nature today. There is an awakening not to put an end to the natural resources but to understand that there is no survival without nature.

The paper proclaims the importance of nature. It teaches the human world to accept the reality of nature. The human race plays a miniature role in the larger scheme of the natural world. They cannot be fully grasped intellectually but can be understood by being ultimately experimental. It strives to wake up the humanity in the globe to gain maturity and to understand the process of harmony with nature. Different genres of literature declares the significance of the power of nature. On the contrary, they also reveal the devastation and havoc

created by nature on the race of humankind. The various disciplines of ecocriticism, creates consciousness when translated into action. Finally, there results and unanimous spark within, that leads to a deeper understanding that nature is the home ground for human relationship to enjoy the glory of nature. The hypothesis of the research paper is to justify the phrase of Barry Commoner in *The Closing Circle*, "Everything is connected to everything else" (Commoner 1). The paper justifies by concluding that everything is connected to anything and everything in the environment. Therefore, the environment remains as a universal shelter from the least to the greater creations of the natural and the human world.

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