



A STUDY OF ECO-CRITICAL PERSPECIVES IN LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

The present paper sought to analyze eco-critical perspective in the realm of literature. It delves into how eco-critical theory brings new avenues in the creation of new literature. It also discusses how eco-criticism has established independent place in the different areas of criticism. Though eco-criticism is an interdisciplinary approach, it draws collaborative insights from various fields of knowledge. It also focuses on reciprocity between literature and school of eco-criticism. Eco-literature is recent trend which deals with eco-logical holism as its ideological basis. Eco-critical theory analyzes and criticizes the ecological ideas reflected in literary texts. It also discusses amalgamation of different subjects such as eco-philosophy, eco-logy and eco-logical ethics etc. Eco-critical theory concentrates on representation of nature in the form of flora and fauna as well as human relations with nature.

Key words - Eco-criticism, Theory, Literary texts, Eco-literature

INTRODUCTION

Eco-criticism is recent school of criticism which deals with perspectives of the relationships that exist between human beings and the natural environment. Eco-critical theory is interdisciplinary approach which establishes reciprocity between various branches of knowledge. Literature is not exception, it also creates new avenues for literary writing. The term 'Eco-criticism' signifies replacement of 'Holocene' through which human agency has

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become geo-physical force. Eco-critical reading of the texts will give an insight about human beings and the natural environment interacts, influence and counter each other. Eco-theoretical texts tend to focus on natural disaster and remedies on the natural crisis. Eco-critics have taken profound interest to explore the ecological elements in the literary texts written by modern and post modern writers. Theoretical discussion on literature through eco-critical perspectives point of view will establish how nature is integral part for the creation of art ,literature and fine art.

THE ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOL OF ECO-CRITICISM:

Eco-criticism deals with the study of relationship between literature and natural environment. It emerged in the mid of 1990. The term was first applied by Paul Crutzen and ecologist Eugene Stoermer ,atmospheric physicist to describe the environmental crisis and its alarming declination and extinction of natural resources. Eco-criticism is a term borrowed from Greek "Oikos" and "Kritis" means "household", nexus of humans, nature and spirit. "Kritis" means judge, "the arbitrary of taste who wants the house kept in good order" (Howarth, 1988:163). It means that well maintained and harmonious relationship between human being and nature. Eco- criticism was officially heralded by the two foundational texts written in the 1990s. "The Eco-criticism Reader" (1996) by Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm "The Environmental Imagination"(1995) by Lawrence Buell are epoch making books on eco-critical constituents in literature. In his celebrated essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Eco-criticism" William Rueckert coined the term "Eco-criticism", in 1978.

William Rueckert wrote that "application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature must be taken in to consideration because ecology has the greatest relevance to the present and future of the world we all live." (The Eco-criticism Reader, 1996:107). An important landmark in the history of eco-criticism was the founding of ASLE (the Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment) which was established in the year 1992 in the United States. Lawrence Buell describes the first two waves of eco-criticism in his book; The Future of Environmental Criticism (2005).Eco-criticism expands the notion of the world. The study of literary texts gradually shifts from inside to outside.

ECO-CRITICISM, GREEN STUDIES AND NATURE WRITING:

According to Peter Barry eco-criticism began in the USA in the late 1980s and Green studies in U.K. began in 1990s. American writers celebrated nature, the life force, and the wilderness in their writing. Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau are the chief exponents those manifested nature in their writings. Emerson's first book Nature (1936) is a reflective essay on the impact of the natural world upon him. In this work he talks about the mystical unity of nature and urges his readers to enjoy a relationship with the environment. Thoreau's

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Walden (1854) is an account of his two year stay in a hut built on the Shore of Walden Lake. American ideas of the picturesque are deeply rooted in the British aesthetic. Eco-criticism or Green Studies in the UK take it origin from the American Transcendentalism of the 1984s and British Romanticism of the 1790s.

Romanticism appealed to masses that "Return to Nature." Romantic literature speaks to our troubled environmental times. Deep ecology movement of the twentieth century promptly remarked that humans are an integral part of nature. Proto-ecological thoughts are found in the literary writing of the romantic Age. "Intrinsic value is the major aspect of Romantic age. Intrinsic value implies that thing has itself irrespective of instrumental value." (Eco-criticism, Swarnlatha Rangrajan, 2018, p21). William Blake's The Book of The (1789) contains intrinsic value of both nature and imagination. Blake's Lilly is typical poem which deals with personification of flower who harbors' negative self image. The Rime of Ancient Mariener deals with natural and supernatural elements. "Peter Heymans analyses the ecological epiphany that takes place in the poem when the Mariner's emotions about the water snakes changes from one of terror to rapture by applying theory of secondary imagination. "(Eco-criticism, Swarnlatha Rangrajan, 2018 p.23).

Romantic eco-critics observe the ways in which romantic writers and thinkers participated in and responded to the history of ecological science and environmental ethics. A collection of essays by Laurence Coupe, "The Green Studies Reader: From Romnticism to Eco-criticism"(2000) shows the evolution of eco-criticism.

NATURE WRITING:

The word nature borrowed from the Latin word "natura". In the literature of 18th century nature meant presentation and construction of the actual characters of people corresponding to reality. Since Vedic time nature has accorded the status of the Great Mother. There is strong belief in Christianity that nature has created for human being children. Eco-criticism has emerged as independent discipline within literature departments of the American Universities. While reviving the romantic sensibility in poetry, William Wordsworth has Chosen wild nature as the backdrop of his poems. Two of the most important works of eco-criticism in the 1990s were the studies of Wordsworth and Shelley. The concerns of nature writing are 18th century deals with scenic sublime and countryside.

Lawrence Buell suggests four criteria for evaluating text for environmental consciousness:

- a) Human and non-human worlds are integrated.
- b) Human interest is not privileged over everything else.



- c) The text shows humans as accountable to the environment and shows any actions they perform which damage the eco-system.
- d) Environment is the process rather than a static condition.

Eco-critics explore underlying ecological values. Changing global environmental crisis is always taken in to consideration in the realm of eco -critical theory.

CONCLUSION:

It discusses eco-critical theory in the context of literary texts. It delves in to major tenets of eco-critical theory. It analyzes origin and development of eco-critical theory. It also takes survey of Romantic school of poetry and American writers in the context of eco-critical perspectives in literature.

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