



# Green Horizons: Exploring Environment Themes in Literature

Dr. Firas Al Jumaili  
Assistant Professor  
English Department  
Al Buraimi University College  
Oman

Dr. Sheren Al Hiti  
Assistant Professor  
English Department  
Al Buraimi University College  
Oman

---

**ABSTRACT:** In recent decades, the environment has emerged as a significant menace to both human civilization and the planet. The widespread misallocation of our natural resources has dangerously brought us to the edge. The rainforests are being deforested, fossil fuel reserves are rapidly reducing, and the natural cycle of seasons is being disrupted. Ecological catastrophes are more common worldwide, and our ecosystem is on the brink of collapse. Amidst these conditions, a novel approach to interpreting nature literature emerged in the last decade of the preceding century, known as Ecocriticism. The movement emerged globally in response to humanity's anthropocentric inclination to dominate nature. This study aims to examine the ecocritical viewpoints found in certain works of global literature. This study of literature with an environmental focus promotes ecological literacy among readers, leading them to become ecoconscious and actively care for the environment. Given the significant importance of environmental issues in today's world, Ecocriticism has seen rapid progress since its beginning. An interpretative method used to analyze nature literature is frequently related to Environmental critique, Green Cultural Studies, Deep Ecology, Eco-spiritualism, and similar fields.

**KEY WORDS:** Environment, Literature, Nature, Ecocriticism

*Received 03 Feb., 2024; Revised 11 Feb., 2024; Accepted 13 Feb., 2024* © The author(s) 2024.  
*Published with open access at [www.questjournals.org](http://www.questjournals.org)*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Ecocriticism is a humanities-based literary criticism trend that emerged in the last few decades. The planet is now facing ecological disasters, which are endangering our ecology. The global ecological crisis may be too big for science and technology to handle. Our perspective on the natural world must shift. In the last 30 years, ecocriticism has grown into a worldwide phenomenon. The 1978 masterpiece *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism* by William Rueckert was the vehicle through which the term ecocriticism was first articulated. Ecocriticism, according to him, is the practice of analyzing literature through an ecological lens. Lawrence Buell argues that ecocriticism is an activist school of thought that studies literature via its relationship to the natural world. Ecocriticism distinguishes itself from conventional nature writing by delving deeper than simple observation of nature. Joseph Wood Krutch contends that Thoreau's connection with nature, rather than the nature of the plants, animals, or birds themselves, is the central emphasis of his writings. In 1948, Henry David Thoreau wrote. Ecocriticism, as pointed out by Patrick D. Murphy, is a branch of literary criticism that grew out of and is concerned with the connection between humans and other species. There are two main schools of thought within ecology: shallow and deep. At its core, shallow ecology is anthropocentric because it holds that people are the center of the universe and that all other forms of life exist for their benefit. The arrogant human race views itself as unique among all living things when it comes to literature. In order to provide a sustainable future, it advocates for the organized use of natural resources like coal, gas, forests, oil, etc. Nature has an intrinsic right to exist, according to deep ecology, which is why it advocates for nature to

remain unspoiled and unaltered. Nobody is superior to any other living thing; every life has value in and of itself. When this is accomplished, ecological balance will be maintained and all living things will have equal rights. The goal of ecocriticism is to make people more environmentally concerned while simultaneously making them less self-absorbed. Our modern environmental crisis has its roots in human civilization. This problem isn't with how the environment works; it's with how our moral framework and actions toward Mother Nature work. Ecocriticism encourages people to become more environmentally conscientious. According to Lawrence Buell, there have been two main schools of ecocriticism. "Nature writing, poetry, and wilderness fiction were the primary targets of the initial ecocriticism movement" (Buell 138). The philosophy of organisms was formerly held in high regard by them. 'Biotic community' preservation was the goal of the wave (Buell 21; Coupe 4). This phase of ecocriticism brought attention to "the effects of culture upon nature, to celebrate nature, berate its despoilers, and to reverse their harm through political action" (Howarth 69). Environmental writers' works are analyzed by the ecocriticism. Concurrently, they place our societal norms and practices in connection to the natural world inside this framework. In many cases, the end product is an attack on the way our society treats the environment with contempt. Environmental literature is only one aspect of ecocriticism. Here, "nature" does not refer just to the aesthetic qualities of things like plants and animals. In this context, "nature" refers to the whole physical world, including both humans and nonhumans. A foundational link is formed between the two by their interdependence; this link is Ecocriticism. For the sake of both humans and the planet, an ecosystem can only thrive in which all forms of life coexist peacefully. A key tenet of contemporary ecological awareness is the need of preserving harmony between people and their natural surroundings. In an ideal ecosystem, all living things coexist without interference from humans or other animals (Frederick 147). Anthropocentrism, the fundamental feature of human nature, puts people in a superior position. Because he is the only being on Earth, man thinks he is better than all the other creatures. On the other hand, ecocriticism emphasizes the inherent value of humans to all natural phenomena. The fatal defect of man in ecology is his fixation on himself and his desire to control, harmonize, domesticate, violate, and exploit all forms of nature, as opposed to a more biocentric view. Biocentrism, on the other hand, emphasizes the value of humanities by investigating the web of connections between humans and other species. Ecocritics' overarching purpose is to reevaluate human civilization's place in the natural world (Barry 252). The current environmental catastrophe is a result of human civilization. Man has always preferred to be in close proximity to natural environments. The landscape's topography is closely linked to its culture. A people's cultural practices are the result of their long-term interactions with their environment. There will be no ecological crisis as long as humans have intimate relationships with the natural world. Yet, man's continued existence is in danger due to the growing distance between himself and environment brought about by technological progress. Natural surroundings are being displaced by the urban environment. It is not the way ecosystems work that is causing our worldwide issue. The reason for this is the way our moral systems work. To survive the crisis, we must learn how our actions affect the natural world. To do this, one must learn about these ethical frameworks and then work to improve them. Everyone from plants and animals, man and the marginalized and indigenous all contribute to maintaining Earth's core life support system. Preserving resources for future generations is crucial to ensuring their safety and security. "Sustainable development is the most common measure to tackle environmental crisis" (Frederick twelve). This clearly refers to the necessary use of natural resources in a way that does not threaten the overall health of the planet and its inhabitants (Essays in Ecocriticism 36). Ecocriticism emphasizes environmental justice since the human desire to dominate nature is exaggerated. Our species used to think it was head and shoulders above all the others in the biosphere. However, modern science has shown us that nature is an equal partner in Earth's ecosystem, not an inferior force. We need to alter our damaging goals. Ecocriticism as an Interdisciplinary Field of Study: Ecocriticism is by definition an interdisciplinary field of study, with a deliberately wide scope. It is nourished by the preexisting conceptions of literature. While other theories see Earth as a social sphere, ecocriticism takes a different tack, viewing it as an ecosphere. Ecocriticism stands apart from all other theories due to its emphasis on environmental sensitivity. To sum up, it's a literary studies method that focuses on the earth and stresses the need of knowing ourselves and our place in relation to Mother Nature. In order to combat the current environmental catastrophe, ecocriticism plays a crucial role in raising readers' awareness of the need to live sustainably. The three most influential American authors whose works exalt the vitality of nature and the American wilderness served as inspiration for ecocriticism; Margaret Fuller (1810–1852), Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–1882), and Henry David Thoreau (1817–1862). Transcendentalism was the first significant literary movement in America to attain "cultural independence" from European models, and the three of them were members of the transcendentalists—a group of New England authors, poets, essayists, novelists, and philosophers. In "Nature", his first introspective literary essay, R. W. Emerson delighted in the impact of nature. Here the author praises what is often called as "transcendentalism"—a unconventional view of nature that holds that "the divine" or "god" is present in all things. He thinks that seeing nature is the surest way to grasp reality. *A Summer at the Lake* by Fuller The American environment is seen by a transcendental traveler in 1843. The Great Lakes area is its home. Fuller distinguishes between the visitors' spiritual and artistic goals

and the settlers' practical ones. Still, most people look to Henry David Thoreau as ecocriticism's ancestor. Two miles from his hometown of Concord, in a cabin on the edge of Walden Pond, was where Henry David Thoreau spent two years of his life, as chronicled in his autobiography *Walden*. Reconnecting with nature is central to this timeless account of abandoning city life in search of personal renewal. The readers' perspectives have shifted from being self-absorbed to being environmentally conscientious, all because of this book. Woodlands, lakes, stars, horses, etc. were all elements that prominent American poet Robert Frost used into his work. On the surface, his poetry is straightforward. However, the universal reality of human existence is revealed by nature when we delve deeply enough. He wrote on the everlasting charm of nature and the responsibilities of this fleeting human existence in "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening." British ecocriticism is in its early stages compared to American ecocriticism. Unlike their American counterparts, British ecocritics are concerned with exposing the dangers that the government, businesses, and neocolonial forces pose to the environment. Deforestation and colonization are often seen as complementary processes, according to Jonathan Bate's "The Song of the Earth." In his *Romantic Ecology*, he reconsiders William Wordsworth's poetry through the lens of the English pastoral tradition. In this piece, Bate investigates the political aspects of poetry and presents the argument that Wordsworth was the first ecocritical writer. *The Green Studies Readers*, edited by Lawrence Coupe, is an extensive reading list of critical works that discuss the relationship among literature, culture, and environment. The book offers a wealth of research materials, making it both a legitimate source and an excellent addition to the field of Green Literature.

## II. CONCLUSION

Ecocriticism, which has long been associated with eco-literature from throughout the globe, has so grown in popularity. Its influence has shifted from regional to international due to the worldwide ecological catastrophe. We are about to destroy ourselves as a species if we don't take care of our home planet, Earth, which we share with all other species. Quickly shifting our focus away from ourselves as humans is essential if we are to listen to the environment sing. There is an abundance of ecological viewpoints in literature throughout the globe. All of the great texts place an emphasis on the environment because of how integral it is to human civilization. A better understanding of how humans should interact with the natural world in light of the current environmental catastrophe will emerge as more ecocritical literature gains attention.

## REFERENCES

- [1]. Buell, L. (1995). *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing and the Formation of American Culture*. Cambridge, London, England: Harvard University Press.
- [2]. Coupe, L. (Ed.). (2000). *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*. Routledge.
- [3]. Frederick, S. (2012). *Contemporary Contemplation on Ecoliterature*. Authorpress. New Delhi.
- [4]. Garrard, G. (2004). *Ecocriticism*. Routledge. USA.
- [5]. Glotfelty, C., & Fromm, H. (Eds.). (1996). *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology*. University of Georgia Press.
- [6]. Jha, S. (2015). *Ecocritical Readings Rethinking Nature And Environment*. Partridge India.
- [7]. Mishra, S. K. (2016). *Ecocriticism in Children's Literature: An Analysis of Amit Garg's Two Tales*. *Galaxy*, Vol-5, Issue5, 91-97.
- [8]. Selvamony, Z. N., Nirmaldasan, R. K. Alex. (2007). *Essays in Ecocriticism*. Sarup & Sons. New Delhi. Reprint.