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Diversified Ecocritical Perspectives In Select Contemporary Indian English Narratives

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Abstract

Indian English writings artistic creation comprises the soul and spirit of nature along with the Indian background. Their writings also establish the relationship that exist between nature and earthly born. The harmonious effect of nature-culture binaries will come into existence only with the amalgamation of eco-aestheticism and eco-centrism by opposing anthropocentric and techno-culture expansion. To establish a harmonious relationship, writers have contributed a lot of writings establishing eco-related theories and principles. Eco theories and its various forms of perspectives are growing more rapidly since its inception in early 1990. It begins from the employment of the arts' imagination and the study thereby can contribute significantly to the understanding of environmental problems that afflict planet Earth today. On whole these eco-theories come under a new arena of ecocriticism and concurs with other branches of the environmental art and humanities such as ethics, history, religious, anthropology and humanistic geography etc., leading to the inception of various principles ideas ecocritical theories. This article is an overview of ecocritical theories employed in select Indian English narratives and poems and aims for deep concern for the environment. This article aims to assist the cognitive understanding of environmental issues and to provide many perceptions and alternative solutions for devastating messing of humans with nature. Methodology of this study is qualitative analysis. Further this study is conducted through textual summary analysis by reading of select narratives of Indian writing in English. Theoretical frame work of this study is within Ecocriticism, Postcolonial Ecocriticism and Concepts like: Anthropocentrism vs Ecocentrism, Deep Ecology etc. are analyzed.

Keywords

Eco Theories, Environmental Dimensions, Wilderness, Environmental Degradation, Harmonious Co-Existence, Exploitation, Environment Concern.

Introduction

Cheryll Glotfelty is a renowned literary scholar. She pioneered the field of ecocriticism. Her works focusses on literature and environment. She edited 'The Ecocriticism Reader' in 1996. This book helped define ecocriticism as discipline. It remains a foundational text in studies. She also co-edited The Bioregional Imagination. This book explores literature's connection to place. Literary studies constantly evolved but have ignored environmental concerns. She argues that

literature should address the global ecological crisis. The field of ecocriticism fills this gap by incorporating environmental awareness. Indian English writings are heavily informed by the local context and cultural aspects. This urges to focus on social justice, post-colonial critique traditional wisdom and eco-concern. Literary forms and narrative structures shape our environmental perceptions. The study of how specific narrative techniques, methods, styles can foster environmental consciousness and articulate ecological experiences. There is growing interest among scholars upon this study to achieve sustainability within environment. Eco-poetics and narrative eco- theories are growing more rapidly since its inception in early 1990. It aims to explore the environmental dimensions of literature and other creative media in the spirit of environmental concern. It begins from the employment of the arts imagination and the study thereby can contribute significantly to the understanding of environmental problems that afflict planet Earth today. On whole these eco-theories come under a new arena of ecocriticism and concurs with other branches of the environmental art and humanities such as ethics, history, religious, anthropology and humanistic geography etc., leading to the inception of various principles ideas ecocritical theories. This article is an overview of ecocritical theories employed in select English poems and narratives and aims for deep concern for the environment. Methodology of this study is qualitative analysis. Further this study is conducted through textual summary analysis by reading of various, select narratives of Indian writing in English. Theoretical frame work of this study is within Ecocriticism, Postcolonial Ecocriticism and Concepts like: Anthropocentrism vs Ecocentrism, Deep Ecology etc. are analyzed.

Key theories and themes

Ecocritical theories in Indian English writings are categorized by employment and integration of western ecocritical approaches with indigenous Indian philosophies. Such an integration leads to diverse perspectives and various themes such as postcolonial criticism, ecofeminism, deep ecology, material ecocriticism, Anthropocene ecocriticism, urban -natural roosting, animal studies and ecocriticism, ecopoetic and narrative theory, activism and praxis, idea of wilderness, eco spiritualism, environmental justice and the more. Here is a clear ecocritical perspective involved in each narrative text of select Indian author. I've analyzed and given a wide view of works with specific ecocritical perspectives like postcolonial ecocriticism, ecofeminism, deep ecology, environmental justice, etc.

Deep Ecology

Deep ecology is an environmental philosophy. It was developed by Arne Naess in 1973. It says all life has equal value. It does not matter if it helps humans. Nature should be protected for its own sake. Deep ecology opposes shallow environmentalism. Shallow ecology only protects nature for humans. Deep ecology goes beyond human interests. It respects all animals, plants. And ecosystems. This idea changes how we treat nature. It calls for a deeper relationship. Deep ecology appears in many books and stories. Writers use it to show nature's importance. Henry David Thoreau wrote about simple living, his book 'Walden' supports deep ecology ideas. Gary Snyder's poems respect nature deeply. His works show the connection in life with nature. Indigenous stories also reflect deep ecology. Many native cultures see human as equal to all living things before nature. Their traditions respect the land and animals. These stories teach harmony with nature. Literature helps spread deep ecology ideas.

In 'Latitudes of Longing', Shubhangi Swarup through the novel treats landscapes such as islands, forests, oceans as living entities, emphasizing interconnectedness between humans and ecosystems. Ecocritical perspective involved are deep ecology Geocriticism (landscape-centered narrative). Through 'Restless Waters of Ichhamati', Bibhutibhushan Bandopadhyay

depicts river Ichhamati as central to rural life, stressing harmonious coexistence and ecological rhythms. Ecocritical perspective discussed are pastoral ecocriticism, river ecology and cultural ecology. Through 'Black Hill', Mamang Dai emphasizes harmony between tribal communities and nature. She has depicted as Nature is sacred, not a resource to exploit and reflects sustainable living and ecological wisdom. Ecocritical perspective involved are Indigenous Ecology & Eco-

spirituality. In 'River of Fire', Qurratulain Hyder depicts that the river (often associated with the Ganges River) functions as a symbol of continuity, time, and civilization.

Unlike urban degradation in Mistry, Hyder presents nature as enduring and cyclical, transcending human conflicts. The narrative spans centuries, showing how human cultures rise and fall while nature persists, aligning with deep ecology's emphasis on the non-human's continuity. The river is not just physical-it is cultural memory, identity, and history, reflecting cultural ecocriticism. Human-nature interaction is shown as philosophical and civilizational, rather than purely material or exploitative. Ecocritical Perspective involved are

Deep Ecology , Cultural Ecocriticism , River Ecology Symbolism.

Postcolonial ecocriticism

Ecocriticism has a keen interest in indigenous art and its environmental imaginations. This interest arouses from the most fundamental world historical concern that also gave rise to ecocriticism. This approach connects environmental exploitation to the historical legacy of colonialism and western models of development. Intersections between ecocriticism and postcolonial studies that began to be explored in early 2000's produced transnational and Eco cosmopolitan perspectives conceiving all attachments to place, region, nation or world. English Indian literature has also been read Eco critically, most notably in Upamanyu Pablo Mukherjee's 'postcolonial environments (2010)'. Mukherjee focuses on contemporary Indian English fiction that discusses the environmental crisis. In 'Gun Island' Amitav Ghosh links climate change, migration, and mythology, showing how environmental crisis affects marginalized communities. He challenges anthropocentrism and highlights non-human agency. Ecocritical perspectives involved in this text are postcolonial ecocriticism, Anthropocene, climate fiction, environmental justice. In 'The Book of Hunter', Mahasweta Devi depicts through roles played in the novel about forest exploitation, tribal oppression, and resistance, connecting ecological destruction with social injustice. Ecocritical perspective involved in this narrative are

Postcolonial ecocriticism, Subaltern ecology, Environmental justice. In 'The God of Small Things', Arundhati Roy the Meenachal River symbolizes the decline of ecological purity due to modernization. Nature mirrors social decay such as pollution parallels moral and cultural breakdown. This shows how capitalism and colonial hangover damage both environment and marginalized lives. Ecocritical Perspective involved in this narrative are Postcolonial Ecology & Environmental Degradation. Through 'The Calcutta Chromosome', Amitav Ghosh explores alternative ecological knowledge systems. The novel challenges Western scientific domination over nature. The writer shows Nature is mysterious and cannot be fully controlled.

Ecocritical Perspective involved are postcolonial Science and environmental knowledge

Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism extends back to prehistoric goddess worship. This term was coined by French feminist Francols d' Eaubonne in 1974. This theory explores the intersection of subjugation of women and the degradation of nature. Often equating the exploitation of land with patriarchal dominance. This theory argues that the battle of ecological survival is intrinsically intertwined with the struggles for women liberation. Grounded in ecological feminist thought this theory can be broadly understood as politically engaged discourse that analyses conceptual connections between the manipulation of women and the non-human it has also explored the differences between men's and women's depiction of nature. It has also explored how creative texts intertwined discourse on women and the environment with discussion of diverse forms of social injustice. In 'Valli,' Sheela Tomy focuses on tribal life and women-nature connections, showing exploitation of both land and marginalized communities. Ecocritical perspective involved in this narrative are Ecofeminism and Indigenous ecology. In 'Budhini', Sarah Joseph focuses on marginalized female experience, linking social oppression with environmental degradation. Ecocritical perspective shown in this work are ecofeminism, Dalit / subaltern ecology. In 'The Dark Room', R. K. Narayan depicts that Nature offers Savitri emotional escape from patriarchy.

Aligns feminine experience with natural

space. Highlights oppression in domestic vs freedom in nature. Ecocritical Perspective involved in this work are ecofeminism and Nature as refuge.

Anthropocene ecocriticism

This theory focuses on the current geological epoch where human activities have a significant global impact on earth's ecosystem. Scholars analyze how literature represents this new reality and the challenges of thinking about environmental issues on a planetary scale. Keki Daruwalla's poem is a treasure trove of ecocritical narratives exploring the intricate relationships between the human and nature. His poetry personifies nature as protagonist, laments the destruction on natural habits, pollution and exploitation of natural resources, explores the complex often fraught relationships between humans and natural world and reflects on the cultural and spiritual significance of nature in Indian society. His notable works 'The Ghaghara in Spate' depicts the destructive force of nature and human vulnerability. His 'Boat Ride along the Gange' explores the impact of human activities on river Ganga's ecosystem. His poem 'Hawk' uses the hawk as the metaphor for the predatory nature of humans and natural world. The theory of Activism and Praxis emphasizes that many scholars and contemporary ecocritics emphasis that this literary field should be activist and transformational towards wilderness. It should not only interpret texts but also to actively contribute environmental conscience to solve real world environmental problems and promote environmental awareness and action. In 'Parva', S. L. Bhyrappa reinterprets Mahabharata with realistic ecological grounding. Through this novel he states that war leads to environmental destruction and shows imbalance between human ambition and natural order. Ecocritical Perspective shown are mythological Ecology and Human-Nature conflict .

Material ecocriticism

Moving beyond nature as a purely cultural construct, this approach focuses on material reality of the nonhuman world and physical environment. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of human and nonhuman matter and agents. In 'A Fine Balance', Rohinton Mistry sets the novel during the emergency in India, where urban space becomes a site of ecological and human crisis. It portrays slums, overcrowding, pollution, and environmental degradation not as background, but as forces shaping human suffering. The displacement of tailors and slum dwellers reflects environmental injustice, where marginalized communities bear the burden of ecological neglect. In this novel, Nature is not romanticized; instead, it is degraded, controlled, and politicized, showing how governance affects ecological conditions. The body itself becomes a site of ecological crisis such as disease, hunger, aligning with material ecocriticism where matter that are environment and body interacts dynamically. Ecocritical Perspective involved are urban ecocriticism, environmental justice, material ecocriticism.

Urban-natural roosting

Landscape / place/space has always been central interests to literature environmental studies. Some of the most distinctive works of first wave environmental studies focused on romantic aesthesis. These studies deliver a powerful calibrated analysis of literature's capacity to memorialize and transmit what place sense means. This emerging concept challenges the traditional romantic separation of urban and rural/wild spaces. This theory argues for the need to see urban life and the natural world as intrinsically linked and for humans to live more sustainably within built environments. In 'Ravan and Eddie', Kiran Nagarkar focus on cramped chawls highlights degraded urban ecosystems, shows how industrialization disconnects humans from nature and environment becomes hostile, artificial, and survival-driven involving ecocritical Perspective of Urban Ecology & Environmental Neglect. In 'Nectar in a Sieve', Kamala Markandaya shows the impact of industrialization on agrarian life which is based on farming and rearing animals, highlighting loss of ecological balance, highlighting the impact of industrialization leading to urbanization. Ecocritical perspective involved are rural ecocriticism, industrialization critique, environmental degradation

Animal studies and ecocriticism

In ecocritical thought process animal studies and ecocriticism plays an important role. Conservation efforts are being taken place espe-

cially in western societies. Western societies focus on the protection of habitats and species. This theory has found a rich space for investigation in the abundant literature on animals in both western and nonwestern tradition. This sub-field focusses on the representation and intrinsic value of nonhuman animals in literature, seeking to challenge speciesism and promote a more biocentric perspective. In 'The Companion Species Manifesto and When Species Meet', Haraway writer has argued that a recognition of how humans are constituted by animals with whom they live. He opens up a post humanist perspective. But she has been attacked for focusing on pet dog rather than on factory forming. Factory forming is a violent form of human's connections with animals. They raise urgent questions not only about animal ethics, animal killing for consumptions but also about environmental impacts given to pollution and climate change. In 'A Flight of Pigeons', Ruskin Bond states that Nature provides refuge during human conflict (1857 revolt). Pigeons symbolize innocence and harmony. Contrasts violence of humans with calm of nature. Ecocritical Perspective involved are Nature as Shelter and Symbol of Peace

Socioecology

This concept socioecology is propounded by Murray Bookchin. He is an environmentalist and social activist. Modern hierarchical organizations and institutions are political in nature and anti-ecological in nature. This theory socioecology rejects such a nature. It advocates reconstructive and transformative outlook on social and environmental issues. It promotes a democratic politics in such issues. This theory describes that the root cause of the present ecological and social issues can be traced to hierarchical modes of social organization. Eco -socialists argue highlight and urge the dismantling capitalism. They focus on common ownership of means of production.

Eco-Marxism

This theory argues that the structural conflict exist between workers and owners of means of production. The owners of the means of production cream off the surplus productions created by labor. This exploitation ease at the heart of all other forms of exploitation and oppression. By solving such a structural conflict, a lot of solution can be found for sustainability of all natural and manmade resources. Thus, it can be said that eco-Marxists identify class conflicts as the key political issue. Social ecologists oppose the power relations and hierarchy. In 'The White Tiger', Aravind Adiga contrasts polluted cities with rural landscapes, environmental damage linked to class oppression and shows how the poor suffer most from ecological degradation narrating under ecocritical perspective environmental Inequality & capitalist exploitation.

Apocalypticism

Apocalypticism is an important concept to be discussed. It means the end of the world is eminent or forth coming. As humans are not ready to change their cultural attitudes and practices against nature will consequently lead to the environmental disaster. There is an urgent need to save the earth by using radical measures. The most alarming of man's assault upon the nature that would lead to apocalyptic effect is the contamination of nature with dangerous and lethal materials. Vandana shiva a prominent Indian environmentalist and author has written extensively on the importance of indigenous knowledge in ecological conservation. In her book 'Earth Democracy (2005)' shiva critiques the industrial model of agriculture and development which is unsustainable and destructs biodiversity instead indigenous agricultural practices are more in tune with the rhythms of the earth which emphasizes the way towards Apocalypticism.

The idea of Wilderness

This idea is the most potent construction of nature. This is the only available to environmentalists. It is a construction initiate to protect particular habitant species and is seen as a place for the reinvigoration of those tired of moral and material pollution of the environment. Research upon this a central to ecocriticism's challenge to the status quo of literary and cultural studies. Anita Desai use nature concerning women characters her work 'Fire on the Mountain (1977)' is the tale chronicles the slow degradation of the Kasauli hills environment and its final annihilation by a massive forest fire. It deals with the dilemma of animal slaughter and man's moral deterioration all of which pose a threat to the environment, which emphasizes the need for wilderness.

Methodology

Approach of this study is qualitative study. Further this study is conducted through textual/summary analysis by close reading of narratives of Indian writing in English.

Theoretical Framework

Theoretical frame work of this study is within Ecocriticism, Postcolonial Ecocriticism and theories like ecofeminism, deep ecology, material ecocriticism, Anthropocene ecocriticism, urban -natural roosting, animal studies and ecocriticism, ecopoetic and narrative theory, activism and praxis, idea of wilderness, eco spiritualism, environmental justice and the more are analyzed

Conclusion

In ecocriticism, nature as a narrative force means that nature is portrayed as an active agent that shapes the story influencing the plot, characters and themes. It is not just a passive backdrop but a dynamic entity that interacts with humans and drives the narrative formats. Nature's power, beauty and complexity becomes integral to the story shaping human experiences, emotions and actions. This perspective highlights the interconnectedness of humans and nature. Indian writers draw on cultural narratives to promote environmental ethic, blending traditional wisdom with modern challenges. Their works inspire readers to adopt sustainable lifestyles and challenge exploitative systems contributing to a broader environment movement and this article thus fulfils the aim for deep concern for the environment.

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