

# **An Ecocritical Approach to Nepali, Indian and English Literature**

**Bimal Kishore Shrivastwa, Ph. D.**

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Post Graduate Campus  
(TU), Biratnagar, Nepal

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Email: [infogain.ijels@gmail.com](mailto:infogain.ijels@gmail.com) ; [editor@ijels.com](mailto:editor@ijels.com)

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## *Preface*

*As a teacher of Contemporary Literary and Critical Theories in the Graduate and Post Graduate levels in Tribhuwan University, Nepal, for more than two decades, I noticed students seeking some guidelines for application of Ecocritical theories to literature. And this book offers the basic concept of eco-criticism and analysis of literature from varied aspects of eco-criticism. This research book assists the research scholars to perceive different facets of environment and stimulates them to make further exploration comparing and contrasting ecology with other disciplines.*

*Biratnagar, Nepal*

*May, 2020*

*Bimal Kishore Shrivastwa, PhD*

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## CHAPTER-1

### INTRODUCTION

**Ecocriticism** as a postmodern literary approach posits high stress on eco-consciousness. "Eco-criticism might succulently be defined as study of the relation between literature and environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmental praxis (Buell, 1995: 138)". In the modern literary world, eco-criticism plays an essential role in upholding literature and environmental ethics. It also synthesizes human being with physical environment. Garrard (2004) view it as "the relationship between humanity and nature is best described as asymmetrically co-independent" (155). Eco-criticism not only studies nature as depicted in literature but also renders human being to have a broader view of nature.

It is inescapable to human for the harmonious relationship with the non-human world. Down through ages, nature is a subject which has fascinated too many writers. Many writers have become eco-conscious or environment conscious. Literature has become a mode of expression about environment and its importance in human life and universe environment protection is a hot issue of present time. Due to the eco-imbalance and the environment pollution, the whole world is under the curse of global warming. Human nature is essentially anthropocentric. We try to dominate nature as the only literary beings in the earth. Ecocriticism tries to rectify our anthropocentric vision which assumes the primacy of humans, so we may save our earth from catastrophic end. Eco-criticism strives hard to keep the earth in a good order, so that the earth's basic life system remains fresh for a sustainable future.

- **Ecocriticism Theory**

Ecocriticism, a concept first arose in the late 1970's at the meeting of Western Literature Association (WLA). It began developing in 1990's which focuses on the relationship human and nature, which tells us man belongs to the earth in much the same way as animals and plants do. The term eco-criticism was first coined by William Rueckert in his critical writing *Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism*. Rueckert (1978) defines "eco-criticism as the application of ecology and ecological principles to the scholarly study of literary works" (72). Ecology means the scientific study about the relationship between air, land, water, animal while ecocriticism considers human as a part of environment and studies interconnection between man and nature. The word 'Eco' comes from the Greek word 'Oikos', which etymologically means household or earth and 'critics' means judge. Cheryll Gloytfeilty is considered as the pioneer ecocriticism. In 1990s ecocriticism had become a recognized field of literature. In 1996 it was officially announced by the publication of the seminal work: *The Ecocriticism Reader* which was edited by Cheryll Gloytfeilty. Glotfelty (1996) defined in *The Eco-criticism Reader*- "Eco-criticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment" (xviii). Peter Barry (1995) writes,

"For the eco-critic, nature really exists out there beyond us, not needing to be ironized as a concept by enclosure within inverted commas, but actually present as an entity which affects us, and which can affect, perhaps fatally, if we mistreat it". (*Beginning Theory*: 114)



Later in 20<sup>th</sup> century people realized the significance of nature and to save the planet earth from environmental crisis caused by industries and other sources created pollution

Ecology has two shades; they are the shallow ecology and deep ecology. Shallow ecology is essentially anthropocentric, which believes that the whole purity of nature is to serve mankind and humans are the masters of nature. Man being is the only literary creature who thinks himself superior over the others. It also advocates systematic uses of natural resources like coal, gas, oil etc. for a sustainable future. But deep ecology changes this conservation mode and advocates preservation of nature to keep its original form without interference of man, as nature has its own right to survive. All organisms on this earth have their own intrinsic value and no one is the master of anybody. This realization will give equal rights to every organism maintaining a balance in the eco-system. Eco-criticism gives emphasis on this eco- consciousness removing the ego consciousness man. The present environmental crisis is a bi- product of human culture. It is not caused by how the ecosystem functions, but how our ethical system functions, how we behave with mother, nature etc. eco-criticism builds this awareness among man.

There are two waves of eco-criticism as identified by Lawrence Buell. The first wave eco- critics “focused on nature writing, nature poetry and wilderness fiction” (Buell: 138). They used to uphold the philosophy of organism. Here environment effectively means natural environment (Buell 21). The aim of the wave was to preserve ‘*biotic community*’. So, ecocriticism initially aimed at earth care. The second wave eco-critics inclined towards environmental justice issues and a social ecocriticism that takes urban landscape as seriously as ‘*natural*

*landscape*' (Buell122). This wave ecocriticism is also known as revisionist ecocriticism.

- **Aim of Ecocritical Movement**

Ecocriticism is considered as the youngest movement of recent times. Though the term was first coined in 1978 by Rueckert but the root of this movement was in Vedas and Upanishads. Rigveda appeals not to cut trees because they remove pollution. Ayurveda refers man not to disturb the sky and do not pollute the atmosphere. In view of present environmental scenario, the eco-critics want the earth to be kept in good order for mankind. There is no single dominant worldview defending eco-critical practice as it is being defined and redefined everyday by actual practice of thousands of literary scholars round the globe to find out the solution to the contemporary environmental crisis through literary study. So, eco-criticism is a branch of science that creates awareness among readers. In order to meet with the present environmental crisis, the ecocriticism plays an important role in building up the eco-consciousness among the readers.

## CHAPTER-2

### ECOCRITICISM IN NEPALI LITERATURE

The idealization of nature and the rural, the natural, ecological and environmental issues exhibiting the bond between man and nature have been addressed in the Nepali literature from the beginning of modern Nepali literature in the late nineteenth century. *The Ramayan* of the Bhanubhakta, known as the ancient poet of Nepal, appeals men, like that of Vedas and Upanishads, not to cut trees because they remove pollution. Nepali poets in the beginning of the twentieth century marked pantheism, that is, the presence of God, divine manifestation in the nature. In the modern era of Nepalese literature, many poets and writers like Motiram Bhatta, Balkrishna Sama, Laxmi Prasad Devkota, Shreedhar Lohani, Iswar ballabh and other have treated earth as mother, nature as mother, creator and protector. These poets and writers have demonstrated growing concern over the transformation of utopian nature into the dystopian environment.

- **Nature as the Metaphor of Mother in Bal Krishna Sama's Poetry**

Bal Krishna sama(1902-1981) is the most versatile modern Nepali painter, artist, poet and dramatist. He can be categorized as an ecocritical poet for raising voices against the deforestation and for the conservation of the environment. In his poem, "**Don't Cut Down the Trees, Brother Woodcutter**", translated by Micheal Hutt, Sama presents his arguments in favour of nature conservation.

The speaker of the poem, Sama himself, pleads the woodcutter not to cut trees because he considers them as our 'dead mothers', silent observers but they protect us from natural calamities. His address to

the woodcutter is his address to the Nepali of all people who are involved in the deforestation:

*Don't cut down the trees, brother  
woodcutter, they are our dead  
mothers,  
And so they cannot plead with us'  
But always they protect us from sun  
And rain. (Sama, 36)*

Sama personifies the tree and gives it the attributes of human. Like our mother. The trees are always around us taking care of us. In our childhood we spend most of our time playing around the trees. It lifts us in its arms and laps as our mother does and feeds us with its sweet fruits and flowers. Sama states:

*Carrying us in their bending arms, they  
Lift us up onto their shoulders  
And suckle us from breasts filled with fruits and  
flowers,  
They kiss our brows constantly with leafy lips,  
Sighing for us. (Sama, 36)*

Here Sama sounds identical to the metaphysical poet, Andrew Marvel who also experienced sensual pleasures in the company of trees in his poem, "The Garden".

When the trees feel tired, they sigh and weep. But they never speak a word; they are capable of tolerating all their grief and pains for our sake. Nevertheless, they never complain. The poet Sama says that in

winter human family sit around the fire burnt from the wood, sing and talk. Then we go to bed to have a sound sleep. In winter the tree heads are covered "with a veil of white frost"(36). How ignorant we are! We do not understand all the sacrifice, tolerance that the trees endure to sustain our lives. The trees silently and secretly pass the cold nights dreaming of our happy and cheerful days we spent during our childhood under their guardianship.

Sama appreciates trees for more attributes:

*They bless our laughter all the time,  
They always love us and our warmth  
But they cannot pour out their inner thoughts to us.  
They wait for us until the winter ends'  
As soon as Spring comes they spread out their arms,  
And begin to summon us:  
Brother woodcutter, don't cut down the trees, our dead  
mothers. (Sama, 36)*

This is a pro-environmental poem. The poet Sama seems more concerned with the pressing problem of deforestation and environmental degradation. He reiterates the idea of considering the earth and its plants as reverent and forgiving to us, the selfish humans who ceaselessly fell down the trees fulfilling their present needs. The poet is indirectly criticizing the human act of clearing the forests, thus making the life of our children insecure. The trees, which stand for nature need to be saved for the posterity, lest human species may get extinct

- **Ecological Organism in Shreedhar Lohani's "Gaia"**

Shreedhar Lohani, a Professor of English in Tribhuvan University, Nepal, advocates ecological, environmental issues in his poem, "Gaia". According to the Greek mythology, Gaia is the Goddess for earth, and hence, a personification or a symbol of earth or biosphere. She was gentle, feminine and nurturing. But at the same time, she was ruthlessly cruel to those who transgressed. In Nepal, the Earth Goddess has many names, such as 'Prithvi', 'Bhu' or 'Bashundhara'. Some modern biologists subscribe to the Gaia hypothesis which views the earth as a single organism. The scientific Gaia see the Earth as a physiological system that is in a sense, alive, and it denotes a systematic cross disciplinary, ecological approach to thinking about human culture as a part of nature.

The poet observes the earth and environment badly disturbed by the destructive activities of human beings:

*The searing wind among the withered palms-*

*The devouring rain-*

*The sea with its cavernous frothy mouth-*

*The crooked beak of a mountain peak-*

*Time plucks at the world. (Lohani, 176)*

The children of the earth have made her ugly. The strong blowing, devouring rain hitting the earth, the broken heights and shapes of mountains bring pollution everywhere on the earth. Thus, there is war, violence and disaster on the earth. The poet Lohani observes:

*The smell of mildew*

*Shrouds the house-  
Turbulence and hunger all around-  
Yet-  
She endures. (Lohani, 176)*

Despite the pain and torture given to her, the Earth has been enduring them all the time because she has a great heart. Gaia is a symbolic representation of earth. It is a natural system that controls itself and endures everything. Gaia is just like our biological mother who bears children and tolerates all that they do. She has been protecting her own destroyer because she is a mother. In addition, this poem has provided the moral and practical ideas and warning related to the ecological issues. There is an implicit threat that if we keep on destroying our nature, she will give us a huge blow through some calamities. Hence, the poet is making a plea to protect, respect our earth mother.

- **Eco-consciousness in Sarubhakta's Poem, "The Rocks"**

"The Rocks", a poem composed by the modern Nepali lyricist and novelist, Sarubhakta, belongs to the literature of ecological genre. The poet appreciates the rocks from the process of their formation to their potentiality of sustaining the ordeals. The rocks stand for the solid shape of our natural world. They can't be withered, nor can they be hewed by any external forces. They contribute to the formation of the mountains and the hills:

*The rocks make the mountain, if they grow,  
The rocks make the hills, if they grow,  
If the rocks deepen,*

*They form the seas of life.  
But rocks do not wither,  
for all battering by the seas of life. (Sarubhakta, 146)*

The poet can mark the "verses of seas on their breasts"(146). He further states:

*The rocks weave  
The poesy of rivers on their breasts. (Sarubhakta, 146)*

A meditative poet like Sarubhakta can overhear the music, songs attached in the rocks. The rocks embody natural tune and natural component. They are the embodiment of the soil water, air and all the elements found in the earth. If people carve stones to designate statues and if they notice gods and goddesses incarnated in the rocks, they are not wrong. In this way the poet marks divine manifestation in the rocks:

*When the rocks weave the rivers' songs,  
The rocks hew out a little,  
But rocks do not count,  
Their weathering as weathering,  
Their hewing as hewing. (Sarubhakta, 146)*

The speaker of the poem, the poet himself, seems to be talking about the life cycle and different dimensions of the rocks. He is, of course, appreciating the strong and powerful presence of the rocks in ocean, rivers after its transformations. The rocks have no form, no shape. The poet further highlights the significance and role of the rocks in these words:



*Without the rocks*

*The rivers have no clours, no shape*

*For, without the rocks*

*The rivers have no colour, no flow*

*The sea and the rivers of life need the sacrifice of  
rocks*

*To become the sea and rivers*

*But rocks continue to be rocks. (Sarubhakta, 147)*

The speaker of the poem is most probably using the rocks in metaphorical sense. The rocks refer to the brave and committed people who are ironclad in their mission. They are compared here with the rocks that do not change shape and form despite many ordeals and sacrifices on their part. They remain what they are supposed to. Therefore nothing can affect them in a concrete sense. By using the ecological, natural metaphor, indirectly the speaker conveys a message that one must not get afraid of the momentary challenges and problems. Rather they should be wise and tactful in dealing with the obstacles.

- **Constructive Nature of Birds in Padma Devkota's "Empty Nest"**

Another prolific Nepali poet and Professor of English in Tribhuvan University, Nepal describes about the constructive Nature of the bird in his poem, "Empty Nest". Because birds are essential components of the eco-system, Devkota can be taken as an advocate of eco consciousness. The speaker of the poem is one of the birds in the nest. The parent birds describe about the tremendous labour they

demonstrated while making the nest for laying and hatching their eggs:

*Ours was the responsibility to construct,  
We took the pains.  
With the mud, sticks and foliage  
We made the nest,  
Then filled it up. (Devkota, 75)*

Sometimes the parent birds face challenges and threats of rain and the wind, eagles and kites. But they managed the hungry beaks, "the chirpings and sweet noises"(75)

The eco-cycle of birth, growth, separation from the family of the birds is shown in the poem:

*The parents' love became life  
Unto the young ones,  
One fine morning, their wings grew strong  
One after another they flew away  
Over the forest, beyond the mountains,  
Beyond the ocean,  
They went somewhere. (Devkota, 76)*

The nature's course of standing on our own feet after we are grown is suggested by describing the flight of the birds. The beautiful nest of the birds has become empty after the flight of their children. However, they live with a dream, with optimism that one day their offspring would return. The poet iterates:

*Between sad memory and joyous hope*

*O! The tottering heart yet dreams*

*Of the joy of union, of being together.* (Devkota, 76)

The familial relationship among the birds is so intimate and interdependent. Here, the birds stand for an elementary part of the eco-system. The natural, ecological pattern of obtaining love and mercy from parents and later on struggling alone is suggested by the poet in the poem. The parents in their domain are much concerned with the life of the younger ones until they are grown up. But they depart from them as soon as they realize that they can seek for their own food.

This natural phenomenon is suggested by the poet in the poem. It is an eco-critical poem in the sense that it reminds us of our natural cycle, journey from birth to death.

- **Ishwar Ballabh's "Preparation for a Valediction": Voice against Dystopian Environment**

Another modern Nepali poet, Ishwar Ballabh displays his concern at the growing deforestation in his poem, "Preparation for a Valediction. And it become poet poses a question to the efforts made by the people of Nepal in deforesting the woods. The green trees are getting chopped and none of the serious actions are being taken by the public, and by the government. This intensifies the poet's grief:

*Like some sober people,*

*The birds were gathering on the boughs*

*But easterly did not come today,*

*And not a single dry leaf fell.  
The pain in the heart aches like a storm,  
And so, such things are worth forgetting.* (Ballabh,  
142)

Because of the massive deforestation, the birds and animals seem to leave the forests and go away somewhere to take shelter. Human beings are declining and destroying not only forests but also rivers, seas, water and other natural resources. The water resources have stopped flowing smoothly due to the contamination stuffed in them:

*Standing on the ridge,  
I stare at the vale, to see if the river comes.  
A few days back, from the same spot  
It had ascended the blue as cloud.  
I know not, whether because of this  
The flow of water was barred.* (Ballabh, 142)

The speaker of the poem, the poet Ballabh himself, marks the absence of fish, fisherman on the one side and presence of tempest on the other due to the rapid deforestation. He expresses his grief:

*The sea had roared,  
Battering the shore and the fields ashore  
The fishermen haven't turned up yet  
with their oars.  
A tempest is likely this time,  
It's wise to go home.* (Ballabh, 142)

By referring to these problematic situations, the speaker attempts to draw the readers' attention towards forthcoming implications of their deeds. Furthermore, the speaker wants everyone to become conscious of the growing ecological and environment problems which do not seem only to harm human life but also to those innocent fellow creatures that enhance the smooth formation and maintenance of the entire ecosystem.

## CHAPTER-3

### OMNIPOTENCE OF NATURE: AN ECOCRITICAL APPROACH TO SELECTED AMERICAN POETRY

In literature, though the ecological thinking sprouts in the ancient literature, it is recognized only in the late 1980s in the USA and in the early 1990s in the UK. In UK the term is known as Green Studies whereas in USA this term is called as eco-criticism. The UK version of eco-criticism or Green Studies takes its bearing from the earlier writings of British romanticism. The term ecocriticism or Green Studies developed with the publication of Jonathan Bate's *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition*. The most opinionated and favorable views regarding nature can be traced to the poets and authors of the Romantic movement who had anointed nature with different names in their works and have won accolades and fame worldwide. Among such poems are Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Byron and many such eminent poets of England. However in American poetry too such spirit of inspiration was observed in the poems of many versatile poets and one of the notable among them is Robert Frost. Nature has been a subject of research since ages. The mysterious nature has infatuated many writers and poets with its astounding beauty and wonderful charm. Be it Wordsworth, Thoreau or Emerson, Keats, none of the writers had been left untouched by the mysteriousness and uniqueness of nature.

Where Wordsworth and Thoreau developed a pantheistic attitude towards nature, Emerson focused on the transcendentalist attitude of it, Keats having had realized the harsh realities of nature developed an escapist attitude towards it. Thus from time to time nature has been a

subject of concern not only for the writers but also for the eco-critics that have helped us to gain a deep insight of nature, and be more sensible towards its protection. In America, the writers like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman have expressed ecological ideas in their works. They are known as transcendentalists and the aim of this literary movement is to achieve cultural independence from European models. These writers have created the foundational work of American eco-centered writings.

In the transcendentalism era, the natural world has been treated as a prestigious subject for writing both the poem and the prose. The poets like Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau and Walt Whitman who are influenced by ecological ideas, in their poems, have dealt nature as a prime subject. For instance, in all his poems, Emerson has expressed a triangular relationship between God, nature and man. He often compares the manifestations in nature with the growth in man and considers it as a sign of divinely development.

**Emerson** (1883-1882) begins the poem "The Song of Nature" with eco-critical note. The poem is written in the form of an address to nature in which she explicates her various form and beauty. In the very opening line of the poem, nature expresses her appearance in the world as night and morning, the pits of air, the gulf of space and the moon. As she describes herself;

*Mine are the night and morning,  
The pits of air, the gulf of space,  
The sportive sun, the gibbous  
moon,*

*The innumerable days.* (Emerson,  
51)

Through these lines, nature has established her supremacy in the world and enumerates that she is part of all living and non-living things. Likewise, in the poem "Humblebee", Emerson reveals his admiration for a burly humblebee and also explores human relationship with other species in the world. As he states:

*I will follow thee again.  
Thou animated torrid zone!  
Zigzag steer, desert-cheerer,  
Let me chase thy waving lines,  
Keep me nearer, me thy  
hearer,  
Singing over shrubs and vines.*  
(Emerson 50)

Emerson believes that the physical environment is perfectly constructed and it is never subjected to decay by any sort of external forces. In his poems, he connects human nature with environmental as he says "No low can be sacred to me but that of my nature" (52). He strongly advocates for human relationship which must be co-existed with nature.

**Henry David Thoreau** (1817-1862), one of the leading transcendentalists, is a prolific writer and an ardent lover of nature. In his poems, he employs the themes of nature and society and propagates the concept of nature throughout his poems. In the poem



"Nature", he exhibits his benign interest towards nature through calling himself as the child of nature;

*For I'd rather be thy child and pupil, in the forest wild,  
Than be the king of men elsewhere,  
And most sovereign slave of care;  
To have one moment of thy dawn,  
Than share the city's year forlorn.* (Thoreau, 43)

Similarly, in his poem "The Moon", Thoreau has used the moon as the symbol of the mistress of the night and compares it with the life of a rustic people. At the outset of the poem, Thoreau says that the moon seems to be calm, loving and peaceful and resembles the life of an ordinary people. As he says,

*The full-orbed moon with unchanged ray  
Mounts up the eastern sky,  
Not doomed to these short nights for aye,  
But shining steadily.* (Thoreau, 140)

By contrast, on the other aspect, in the night, the moon is the brightest thing in the sky. Therefore, Thoreau symbolizes the moon as the mistress of the night. He describes:

*And if she faintly glimmers here,  
And paled is her light,  
Yet always in her proper sphere  
She's mistress of the night.* (Thoreau, 142)

This poem vividly expresses Thoreau's love and appreciation toward the moon. Like Emerson, Thoreau believes that the highest law is not that created by man, but that which is ordained by nature. Through this poem Thoreau epitomizes that any deviation from the patterns of nature will destroy man from his own nature.

**Walt Whitman** (1819-1892) is another remarkable poet in the transcendentalism era. His poems deal with American; democracy, landscape and the people. He believes that every human being is influenced by their surroundings. Therefore, most of his poem, he discusses the theme of recycle or regeneration that a man can alienate himself from the natural world but he cannot escape from his connection to it. In the poem "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd", he epitomizes the concept of regeneration. Though the poem is considered to be a pastoral elegy, the elaborate depiction of natural world and rustic human society typify the regeneration of both nature and human. As he depicts;

*When lilacs last in the dooryard  
bloom'd,*

*And the great star early droop'd in the  
western sky in the night,*

*I mourn'd, and yet shall mourn with  
ever-returning spring.*

*Ever-returning spring, trinity sure to  
me you bring,*

*Lilac blooming perennial and drooping  
star in the west,*

*And thought of him I love.* (Whitman,  
383)

Whitman uses the symbols of a bird, star and flowers to develop an idea of nature sympathetic to yet separate from humanity. For example, the song of the bird signifies Whitman's understanding of nature and its beauty. He vacillates on the nature of symbolic mourning. At times he seems to see his offering of the lilac blossom as being symbolically given to all the dead; at other moments he sees it as futile, merely a broken twig.

Similarly, in the poem, *Song of Myself*, he elucidates his intimate relationship with nature. He despises his own identity which separates him from the nature. He says "Houses and rooms are the full of perfume". He employs the 'perfumes' as the symbol of entropy which separate him from the universal. In Walt Whitman's poems, the life of plants symbolize the development and multiplicity of the population of the United States. The poem, "When Lilacs Last in the Dooryard Bloom'd", the eco signifiers like flowers, bushes, wheat and trees symbolize the possibilities of regeneration and re-growth after death.

**Robert Frost** (1874-1963), a pioneer and one of the modern poets of America, has truly been an eye opener by contributing to have brought the eco-critical concepts in his poems. So this work is an attempt to let the people know more closely about the nature's relationship with human beings through the beautiful and most prominent eco-critical poems of Robert Frost.

Whether it be "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening", "Departmental, Design, Nothing Gold can Stay", "The Road not Taken" and many such poetic creations of Frost, one of the profound

facts is that there is no single poem without human beings. Frost always created them with a view to make the human beings aware of their relationship with nature and other creatures in the environment. Let's take one of the wonderful poems of Frost "The Gathering Leaves" in which the poet talks about the autumn season that hangs amidst leaves and harvest. The speaker's optimistic attitude in the poem is really appreciable:

*Next to nothing for  
weight;  
And since they grew  
duller  
From contact with  
earth,  
Next to nothing for color*  
(Frost, 17-20)

The line represents speaker's monotony of life's daily tasks in raking leaves yet a playful mood can be noticed in the speaker's attitude when he says; "And bags full of leaves/ Are light as balloons"(3-4) and "Of rustling all day/ like rabbit and deer/ Running away"(6-8). These lines show the enjoyment felt by the speaker while finding fun in the details of his work. Who can forget the best ever poetical and remarkable lines:

*Woods are lovely,  
dark and deep,  
But I have promises  
to go*

*Before I  
sleep.*(Frost,13-15)

Through these touching lines of the poem , Frost has given us a very simple and fine lesson of life that we take for granted our shallow and deep feelings only towards our personal and mandatory obligations but forgets that life is more than that a big duty rather than an option that motivates us to go ahead without stopping. We should keep going on and moving on with holding our responsibilities in this path of life.

Another remarkable creation of Frost came out with this finest poem "Apple Picking" that truly captures the ecocritical vision of the poet. It helps us to realize that each and every aspect of nature has a message for human beings:

*And there's a barrel that I  
didn't fill*

*Beside it, there may be two or  
three Apple*

*I didn't pick upon.*

*But I am done with apple  
picking now* (Frost, 3-6)

The poem reveals that human life which is subject to death and decay is unaffected by the fulfillment or not filling of the infinite desires but only are responsible for their misery and sufferings. The efforts made to achieve the desired goals matter the most and the satisfaction achieved through it is the salvation.

Hence Frost through his finest and wonderful lyrical creations has been aptly successful in creating an ecocritical environment enclosed with a literary aura that helps the readers to gain a deep insight into the realm of nature in a simple and joyful manner. It rightly sensitizes the approach of human beings towards nature and creates an ecological consciousness and awareness of the various ecological problems which otherwise would have been chaotic and ambiguous for them. He is purely didactic in his approach the reason being he leaves upon the readers to reach at the conclusive decisions as per their own instincts and understandings.

## CHAPTER-4

### ECOFEMINISM

Ecofeminism emerged in the 1970s and became recognized worldwide in the 1990s. "As a combination of feminist and ecological movements, it is based on the association between the patriarchal society's oppression of women and its domination of the natural world, both of which are the victims of the patriarchal society" (Karren, 1994: 98). It is interesting to explore the Eco feminism in the poems of Alice Walker and analyze with African-American literature, especially of black woman. Eco-feminism stresses a connection between the exploitation of nature and women. The Eco feminist endangers the human being threatened by the devastation of environment and specially woman are exposed to greatest dangers which focus on the births of deformed babies, miscarriages due to radioactive waste, and serious health problems affecting the woman, the family, and society. Some Eco feminists assert that women have a greater appreciation of the connection between nature and humanity. This keen awareness makes women more attentive than others to ecological problems nominates them to speak for the environment and defend it against abuse and maltreatment.

- **An Ecofeminist Approach to Walker's Poetry**

Alice Walker, a modern American poet, devoted a considerable part of her life to writing about the origins of her works, her beliefs and sufferings. There have been sufficient works covering Alice Walker's prose especially the novel *The Color Purple* (1983) but concerning Walker's poetry, it has been difficult to find more information which

focused on eco-feminism. We can use discourse analysis as a tool to analyze Walker's poems from her works – *Her Blue Body: Everything We Know Earthling Poems* (1992). It is a compilation of six books. Other prominent poems of Walker are "Once" (1968), "Revolutionary Petunia" (1973), *Her Blue Body Everything We Know: Earthling Poems* (1991), *Collected Poems* (2005), *Hard Times Require Furious Dancing: New Poems* (2010). Her work is deeply rooted in cultural and historical traditions. They are closely linked to environmental concerns and so cannot be seen outside an ecological framework. Walker sees sexual oppression and exploitation of environment as parallel to male domination and qualifies herself as an eco-feminist writer. Thus Walker links misogyny and environmental oppression to racial oppression. Walker excels Eco-feminism and advocates a spiritual eco feminist attitude to overcome the strain of race and gender. Spiritual Eco-feminism rejects Christian belief of anthropocentrism with the 'white' masculinized construction of God. Finally Walker believes in classical, essential human denying the specific and diversity of cultural values. We cannot acknowledge the usefulness of Eco feminist methodology for analyzing the poems or texts across cultures or nations and to entitle various representations of woman and nature analogy. The triumphant ecofeminist writers like Walker, Atwood, Toni Morrison and many Indian writers like Kamala Das, Arundhati Roy, have explained and focused on the cultural construction of woman and nature for dealing and subverting the same. An urgent need is to redefine the human relationship with nature through Walker's approach that "animal life is the spiritual equivalent to oxygen". (10).



Alice Walker presents an understanding of poetry through the theory of eco-feminism that marks a connection between the exploitation of nature and women. As a woman, Walker's roots go back to Africa. She depicts nature in her poetry as being oppressed in the same sense that both women and African people have been subjugated. Thus, she connects nature to history showing how the environment, women, blacks, the colonized, the poor, and children are exploited and dominated. What Walker yearns for in her poetry is a community born out of love rather than of oppression. Therefore, she calls on all voices of the community to be recognized and heard. Through an eco-feminist lens, Walker weaves into her poetry an insight that acknowledges the interconnection of all living entities on earth and emphasizes that each being, whether human or nonhuman, has a purpose to fulfill in the world

Walker reflects her concern over racial, sexual and political issues, mainly related to black women's struggle for survival. In spite of Walker being a prolific novelist, she was an accomplished poet too. She started her masterly career as a poet and continued to publish volumes of verse. The poem "Once" deals with racism on multiple levels because racism exists on many levels.

The poem "Good Night, Willie Lee, I'll See You in the Morning" is one of Walker's most anthologized works that explores what can be termed as bad or dysfunctional relationships. In this poem the final word given on this subject is forgiveness that permits redemption both in life and in death. It remained a touchstone piece in Walker's oeuvre. It is a fifteen-line poem that consists of only fifty-six words. It magnifies the expectation of the dead father's wife who promises to see her husband again, giving references to heaven or afterlife or the

Christian belief in the resurrection of the death and the day of reckoning. In this way, ‘morning’ is metaphorical which indicates a spiritual awakening rather than physical one. The theme is true forgiveness absolves the one who is forgiven and thus redeemed and that allows the speaker’s father to return:

*Looking down into my  
father’s Dead face*

*For the last time my  
mother said without Tears,*

*Without smiles without  
regrets*

*But with civility “Good  
night, Willie Lee, I’ll see  
you in the morning.”*

*And it was then I knew that  
the healing*

*Of all the wounds is  
forgiveness*

*That permits a promise of  
our return at the end.*

(Walker, 4)

The poem "Her Blue Body Everything We Know: Earthling Poems", brings a women’s wisdom to bear on love, life’s unavoidable tragedies, black’s struggle for equality and justice and a globe spinning toward eco-suicide:

*Besides: My struggle  
was always against*

*An inner darkness: I  
carry within Myself*

*The only known keys To  
my death - to unlock life,*

*Or close it shut Forever.*

*A women who loves  
Wood grains, the color Yellow*

*And the sun, I am happy  
to fight*

*All outside murderers  
as I see I must. (Walker, 5)*

The poetry collection from "Once" progresses from early, fine portrait of travels to East Africa through tight, politically charged report from the Deep South of the late 1960's and early 70s which produced "Revolutionary Petunias" : a confession of spiritual breakdown ,which was followed by an expansive reaching out to the world in "Horses make a Landscape Look more Beautiful". Her strong, beautiful voice deviate from admiration for the earth to fiery protest over the West's use of the Third world as a dumping ground for wastes and nuclear tests. Controlling the pointless predicament of our finite lives, these poems call us to heal ourselves and the planet:

*Surely the earth can be  
saved by*

*All the people who  
insist on love.* (Walker, 4)

Walker, a woman of passion highlights in her poems the personal beliefs of Africa, multiracial relationships and the pangs of love are intricately intertwined and evident in her poetic collections. She also shares her admiration for the environment, plants and Earth in particular. she brings all living beings under the microscope in such a way that she could robotize them as per her wish. She is a poet who is intensely personal and frequently elegiac. She speaks to herself saying:

*I am the woman with blessed  
dark skin,*

*I am the woman with teeth  
repaired,*

*I am the woman with healing  
eye*

*The ears that hears.* (Walker, 4)

Walker confides that she thought that she had reached her end of her career and was at peace with it, as a poet after the poem ‘Absolute Trust in the Goodness of the Earth’ but the brutal terrorist attack of September 11, 2001, on the United States forces her to write poems regularly. According to Walker, an eco-feminist vision is what further connects women and nature is the fact that both are victims of male domination.

Thus, the poems of Alice Walker are closely linked to environmental concerns and so cannot be seen outside an ecological framework.

Walker sees sexual oppression and exploitation of environment as parallel to male domination and qualifies herself as an ecofeminist writer. Walker links misogyny and environmental oppression to racial oppression. Walker excels Eco-feminism and advocates a spiritual eco feminist attitude to overcome the strain of race and gender. Finally Walker believes in classical, essential human denying the specific and diversity of cultural values. The eco-feminist writers like Walker, Toni Morrison focused on the cultural construction of woman and nature for dealing and subverting the same. An urgent need is to redefine the human relationship with nature and it's through Walker's approach that "animal life is the spiritual equivalent to oxygen."

- **Ecofeminist Drive in Steinbeck's Works**

John Steinbeck is a modern American writer with strong ecological consciousness. He makes vivid depictions of environment and land in his novels and stories. Let us focus on his classic story "The Chrysanthemums" from eco-feminist point-of-view. The primary theme of the story "The Chrysanthemums" is issue of creative frustration. Women and Nature are living organisms which contribute immensely to the sustenance of the family and environment respectively.

John Steinbeck, in his short story "The Chrysanthemums" depicts the story of a strong and brave woman, who is facing male chauvinism in society and is inflicted with the torment of constant mental agony. The writer encompasses the vision of a woman trapped in a man's world. He sets the background on the panoramic Salinas Valley, in a

cold and foggy winter morning, and portrays the myriad emotions of the protagonist Elisa Allen. Elisa is thirty-five, lean and strong, with a charismatic character. She is a fighter who doesn't give up easily and lives for being the person she is. Henry tries to compensate Elisa's grief of being childless with formal gestures of cordiality and compassion but much in vain. Elisa finds peace and reclusiveness in her chrysanthemums' garden and considers it as her surrogate children. She takes pride in her skills as a gardener, and craves for being recognized for her work and potential. As the story proceeds, Elisa feels that her power and potential are confiscated within the barbed fence of her garden. She recognizes her powers of man, as she could plough, reap and toil like the masculine gender. Imbibed with the strength of a man, she tries to justify her impulses by camouflaging her beauty and sensuality in manly attire and a hat.

The story begins with Elisa working in her garden. She is surrounded by a barbed fence that is meant to protect her flowers from insects and pollution. Even though she is inclined to male facets, her motherly love for her flowers and her attachment to nature reflect her feminine qualities. It is a woman breathing in her senses, "as she digs into the forest of new green chrysanthemum sprouts that were growing around the old roots (1)". When her husband approaches to persuade her to take care of the apple orchard, despite her being aware of her talent, Elisa says that apple orchard belongs to the man's world.

Then comes the stranger, the antagonist. The tinker makes Elisa realize her real self. He is a worker and appreciates her qualities as an excellent gardener. He even wants to carry some flowers for one of his customers. Elisa, for few moments, forgets her masculine charm

and opens up trying to give the best of her flowers to be carried by the man. This fills her mind with optimism and vigour of feminine acceptance. Elisa notices “that under the high grey fog [the willow trees] seemed a thin band of sunshine”. As the stranger leaves, she waits for her husband. Henry is surprised at her fresh countenance and says, “Why, - why Elisa. You look so nice...I mean you look different, strong and happy.”(Steinbeck, 10)

The appreciation of her husband for her beauty and her chastity makes her realize that he, in fact, likes her feminine countenance. However, Elisa confronts major shock when she sees that the stranger has thrown the chrysanthemum sprouts onto the road and only the pot was taken. She has a setback which makes her realize that she was in vain looking for the recluse of man power, as she could also be happy and contented in the life of a woman and a family. Finally Elisa cries weakly at the end, making her look “like an old woman” and accept the fact that she has to live as a woman and has to be contented in the male dominated world.

The story has rich eco-feminist symbolism. The chrysanthemum stalks seem to be phallic symbols, and Elisa's "over-eager" snipping of them suggests castration. Then in the "rooting" bed, Eliza herself becomes masculine, inserting the "little crisp shoots" into open, receptive furrows". The shoots can be understood as Eliza's children considering the way in which she communicates with the tinker on how to care for them. This makes perfect sense, but Eliza seems more concerned with the loss of her own life. For too long, the chrysanthemums have served in place of children. She is looking into reclaiming her own life, not finding another electric connection to live her life through.

Eliza's character is an androgynous one. An inner struggle is visible in the way she dresses herself: "*Her figure looked blocked and heavy and her costume, a man's black hat, pulled low down over her eyes, clod-hopper shoes, a figured print dress almost completely covered by a big corduroy apron with four big pockets to hold the snips, the trowel and scratcher, the seeds and the knife she worked with. She wore heavy leather gloves to protect her hands while she worked.*"(1)

On one hand, she fulfills her primary role of a home-maker very efficiently. On the other, she is into plowing, sowing and toiling in the garden –considered to be a masculine job. She is pleased when her husband, Henry, comments about her "strong" chrysanthemum crop for the masculinity of the term but her husband reminds her of her femininity by offering her an evening in the town. After this conversation with her husband, she goes back to her masculine role of transplanting the flowers.

This explains the reason for Eliza's over eager tendencies toward work in the cultivating of her plants and the care she puts into the house -- it is referred to by Steinbeck as "hard- swept" with "hard-polished" windows:

*Behind her stood the neat white farm house with red geraniums close-banked around it as high as the windows. It was a hard-swept looking little house, with hard- polished windows, and a clean mud-mat on the front steps.* (2)

Steinbeck's eco-awareness and complex attitude to women can be found echoed in "The Chrysanthemums." In "The Chrysanthemums", the women's struggle for equality is portrayed through Steinbeck's character Elisa Allen. It shows "a strong, capable woman kept from



personal, social, and sexual fulfillment by the prevailing conception of a woman's role in a world dominated by men. Elisa's appearance, actions, and speech depict the frustration women felt in Steinbeck's masculine world of the 1930's.

“The Chrysanthemums” takes place in Salinas Valley, California, a site of isolation that builds an atmosphere of hopelessness. The winter fog sits “like a lid on the mountains and made of the great valley a closed pot,” (Steinbeck, 359) which effectively foreshadows what a dead end Elisa’s life will reveal itself to be-

*Her feminine vulnerability is exposed when the man touches her Achilles' heel, the chrysanthemums. He takes her for a ride with a fake interest with the flowers to get to her. The masculine self is symbolically peeled off when she removes the gloves and the hat and leaves her vulnerable for the exploitation by the tinker. (212)*

Having proven she is able to raise potentially award-winning chrysanthemum patches, she demonstrates her competence in creation and nurturing—two skills she can only apply to her flower patch because Henry, for whatever reasons, will not allow the introduction of children to the family. In the meantime, Elisa has no choice but to deal with her lack of children and apply her motherly parenting skills to her flower bed. There is a fence around the flower garden to protect it from animals, but interestingly enough it even seems to keep Henry Allen himself out. By maintaining a garden, which requires some degree of physical labor, Elisa is trying to pretend that she is engaged in the activities of men, seeing as to how a metaphorical fence keeps Elisa out of men's affairs.

Elisa carefully prunes the stalks of the chrysanthemums, and ensures that in her flower patch “no aphids were there, no snow bugs or snails or cutworms. Her terrier fingers destroyed such pests before they could get started” (360). The insects pose as natural threats to Elisa’s “children” and so she eradicates them before they cause any harm, much like any good mother would do. As a result of her methodical tending to the flowers, as Henry points out, “some of those yellow chrysanthemums...were ten inches across” (360).

At the end of the story, Elisa, while going to the town with her husband, finds the bunch of chrysanthemums discarded by the tinker on the road. She feels extremely hurt by this cruelty towards her flowers by the tinker. It once again shows the male indifference and disregard towards Nature and prove that they use it to their own benefit. Because he had wanted to touch the right chords of Elisa’s heart and to make her yield to his request, the tinker had initiated conversation with her revolving around the chrysanthemums and had appreciated her skill of growing it. He was not actually impressed by them. Hence he just discards them on the road oblivious to the fact that Elisa might travel through that road and notice them lying there.

Thus, an eco-feminist study of the story reveals the fact that women as well as nature are usually ignored, oppressed and destroyed by male-chauvinists. Steinbeck aims to criticize the patriarchal ideology, utilitarianism and man-centrism as he strongly holds that there exists a natural tie between nature and feminine spirit. Through the image of Elisa, the insightful author expresses his sympathy towards nature, women and their fate. There is a strong connection between Elisa and the chrysanthemums she has grown and gifted to the tinker. The chrysanthemums represent Elisa. Like Elisa, they are dormant and

bare, not in bloom. Like Elisa, they are confined to a narrow environment of the garden, with no way to escape. They are beautiful, decorative flowers, but serve no useful function beyond this ornamental one - in the same way, as a woman, Elisa is unable to do or is not allowed to do anything more than a limited range of tasks, and certainly none that would allow her to be independent or provide for herself.

## CHAPTER-5

### ECO CONSCIOUSNESS IN SELECTED INDIAN LITERATURE

The reflection of ecological concerns in literature has made its remarkable entry in the Indian literature with the writings of many modern Indian writers. One of the important aspects of these writers is that they write predominantly the relationship between man and nature. They have given more poignancy to the exploration by dealing not only with beauty of the nature but also with power of the nature. The Indian writers who are interested in nature and depicted the relationship between man and nature in their writings are Raja Rao, R.K Narayan, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamala Markandya, Anita Desai, Kiran Desai and Amitav Ghosh and so on. Raja Rao deserves a permanent place in the ecocritical tradition with his acclaimed work *Kanthapura*. The works these writers offer a glimpse into the aspect of ecology and environmental crisis.

#### • **Environmental Concerns in the Novels of Amitav Ghosh**

Amitav Ghosh is one of the most eminent and accomplished writers of this genre with a strong eco-consciousness. He occupies a significant place in the world of eco-criticism. His works deal with the major themes of migration, displacement, subaltern experiences as well as the global concerns of environment related to flora and fauna. His novel, *The Hungry Tide* (2004) is considered for analyzing his consciousness towards ecology. Human beings are closely associated with the nature. They constantly depend on it and interact with it.

The story of Amitav Ghosh's novel *The Hungry Tide* unfolds in the backdrop of Sunderbans which is a bioregion. Sunderbans is a beautiful land situated amid the wind and the tides and largely covered by mangrove forest. The two main characters around whom the story revolves are Kanai Dutt and Piyali Roy. Kanai is a translator and business man who comes to the Island of Lusibari to meet his aunt Nilima. Through his late uncle Nirmal's notebook, Kanai happens to know about the conflict between human and non human life forces, resettlement tragedy of Morichjhapi in the name of conservation. The diary also reveals the story of Kusum and her son Fokir who are the victims of eviction from the island of Morichjhapi. Piyali is an American born cetologist who comes as a researcher to conduct studies on Irrawaddy dolphins which are exclusively found in the rivers of Tide country. She takes the help of Fokir to trace the region of dolphins.

The novel explores not only nature in its beauty but it also appears as hungry for human blood. The ebb and flow represents all the traumatic issues of nature. The following description about mangrove forest that Kanai reads is apt to the situation:

*A mangrove forest is a universe into itself...Mangrove leaves are tough and leathery, the branches gnarled and the foliage often impassable dense. Visibility is short and the air still and fetid. At no moments can human beings have any doubt of the terrain's utter hostility to their presence, of its cunning and resourcefulness, of its determination to destroy and expel them. Every year dozens of people perish in the embrace of that dense foliage, killed by tigers, snakes and crocodiles. (7-8)*

It unfolds the devastating effects of nature towards man. In the section “Canning”, Kanai becomes speechless and shocked on seeing the plight of the passengers in the mud. Champahati, the threshold of Sundarbans, was merely “a pond filled with foaming grey sludge” (9). The Malta river, which in 1970s was a “... vast waterway, one of the most formidable rivers he had ever seen”, had become “no wider than a narrow ditch” (24) at low tide. He felt upset and disturbed to the sight of the people travelling to Canning. They had to walk through the mud piled up to the level of their hips.

The life at Lusibari became hard and risky as the people had to suffer and survive with a single meal. Natural calamities like floods and storms cause major damage and land become infertile due to soil erosion. To the people of Lusibari, “. . . hunger and catastrophe were a way of life”(79). The place had undergone a dramatic change. The sky that was “darkened by birds at sunset” and the scarlet mud banks filled with “millions of swarming crabs” had faded away gradually. And Nirmal curiously interrogates, “Where had they gone ... those millions of swarming crabs, those birds?” and he anticipates the signs of destruction. “The birds were vanishing, the fish were dwindling and from day to day the land was being reclaimed by the sea” (215).

The novel also unveils the environmental issues related to the village of Morichjhapi through Nirmal's diary. It contains some personal history of Nirmal's life. Morichjhapi was selected as a place for tiger preservation project by the government. The place was occupied and inhabited by refugees from East Pakistan. They found vast land in Sunderbans and created their livelihood. Ghosh eloquently summarizes the events at Morichjhapi in 1979 through Nirmal's account. As the place became tiger reserve, the refugees were

forcefully evicted from the island. Nirmal in his diary writes about the efforts of the refugees to build in a new life:

*Saltpans had been created, tube wells had been had been planted, water had been damned for the rearing of fish, a bakery had started up, boat builders had set up workshops, a pottery had been founded as well as an ironsmith's shop; there were people making boats while others were fashioning nets and crab lines; little market places, where all kinds of goods were being sold, had sprung up. (192)*

The novel poignantly shows the trauma of Morichjhapi settler and victim, Kusum in the following lines:

*The worst part was... to sit here, helpless, with hunger gnawing at our bellies and listen to the police man say... 'this island has to be saved for its trees, it has to be saved for its animals....it is a part of a reserved forest, it belongs to a project to save tigers...' Who are these people, who loved animals so much that they are willing to kill us for them? (262-263)*

Ghosh, through *The Hungry Tide* presents, important ongoing controversies between governmental agencies, nongovernmental organizations, environmental activists, socialists, human and animal rights protection groups, tribal, tidal inhabitants and urban inhabitants, about the exigency for inculcating fair environmental policies that do not show favour to any one species while crushing another. The novel concludes with several positive measures suggested towards an eco-friendly relationship between human populations and their environment.

Thus, Amitav Ghosh's novels deal not only with the life style of the inhabitants of Indian landscape. They demonstrate the non-human perspectives like trees, rivers, mountains and animals and their relevance in the total understanding of environment. Nature is rapidly being gulped up in the name of nurture, so it is the urgent need of the day to maintain ecological balance. Ghosh's eco-centric approach will allow the people to think deeply about the crisis and to find out a remedy for it.

- **Dystopian Environment in Adiga's *Last Man in Tower***

Arbind Adiga's novel, *Last Man in Tower* (2011) depicts the growing dystopic environment in Indian cities. The novel with its setting in Mumbai depicts the problems of corruption, politician builder nexus, lack of standard life, unhygienic conditions of living, slums and the age old chronic and infected perpetual problems of visionless politician which have been remained unsolved by successive governments since 1960 and also after the globalization in special reference. The tower was built in 1950 where it is described on a plaque in hour of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as 'Good Housing for Good Indians' with an intention to serve as an example but the intention remained absent in progress of the course of developing India. It reflects the citizens having worries, concerns and lack of pleasures. The location of tower is a symbolic example of progressing India in the midst of wretched slums ridiculing a utopian dream of 'Developed India'. The setting in the novel revolves around the Vishram Society – Tower A. Despite its location close to the airport, under the flight path of 747s and bordered by slums, it has been pucca



for some fifty years. It was erected way back in 1950s when Vakola was semi-swamp, a few bright mansions amidst mangroves. Wild animals and Dacoits would roam about behind thick banyan trees at dusk, preventing rickshaws and taxis to travel in these areas. But the residents cut down the trees paving way to the main road, built thick compound wall securing the inhabitants of the area. Mangroves disappeared and there developed reputation for middleclass people among few housing societies showing the signs of progressive modern society.

*A banyan tree has grown through the compound wall next to the booth. Painted umber like the wall, and speckled with dirt, the stem of the tree bulges from the masonry like a camouflaged leopard; it lends an air of solidity and reliability to Ram Khare's booth that it perhaps it does not deserve. The evening cricket games have left most of the compound bare of any flowering plants although a clump of hibiscus plants flourishes near the back wall.( 17-18)*

This is the picturisation of transformation, gentrification, and development in post colonial period in a cosmopolitan city. With times changing in 21<sup>st</sup> century when globalization and liberalization accounts for progressive society, Real estate developer Dharmen Shah offers to buy out the residents of Vishram Society, planning to use the site to build a luxury apartment complex, his offer is more than generous. Many of the residents have lived in Vishram for years, and many of them are no longer young. But none can benefit from the offer unless all agree to sell.

The natural environment is slowly diminished by the corrupt businessmen and politicians disrupting the peaceful habitat of birds and animals. Thus giving rise to unhygienic slums, poverty and struggle for survival in every sphere and place.

Shah seems symbolic of the new India, a callous, generous, ambitious man who apparently arrived in Mumbai “on bare feet”. The residents of Vishram Society, by contrast, have until now desired little more than respectable, comfortable lives. They have lived together as a cooperative for decades. The tower is creaking – airplanes fly narrowly past it, running water is only sporadically available, the walls are peeling and crumbling. But is also a symbol of community and cooperation: within it “cross beams of affection” are wanted to grow: “If one couple went to bed early the other couple turned off their television and went to bed.” His life’s efforts have destroyed his health to the point where there’s a distinct likelihood he may not see the story’s end. His son is sliding off the rails, and he believes it’s due to his karma; a karma which he feels has doomed him from the start. As the novel goes on it seems that Shah’s perpetual striving for expansion is a consequence of the environment around him rather than, as we might expect, vice versa:

*Look, how this city never stops growing, rubble....plants, mulch, left to themselves, start slurping up sea, edging towards the other end of the bay like a snake’s tongue, hissing through salt water, there is more land here, more land. (146)*

The bare facts of the story don't correlate with the depiction, in which he's as much a victim as anyone else. At the same time Masterji appears, on a simple ethical level, to have a case. Masterji had spent his forty-four years in Mumbai exactly in the manner prescribed by the Hindu philosophers: like a lotus in a dirty pond, be in the world but not of it. Masterji's moral grandstanding has removed any trace of empathy for the people around him. They are living in difficult circumstances and needn't any more. Is he any less selfish than Shah? He is too egoistic, stubborn relating to his residence. He saw his life from his point of view and ignored other's wanting to improve their own standard of living. He's simply fighting for "The earth, in infinite space. A point on it that was city of Mumbai and where Vishram Society was located. His neighbours, greedy hypocrites willed to betray long-standing companionship for money, simply trying to do the best for their families.

The banyan trees all of which were hemmed in by the fencing; except for one graying ancient whose aerial roots, squirming thru the barbed wire and broken glass, dripped down the wall. The broken glass and barbed wire represents the development that took place destroying the original place where banyan trees grew. The root tip grew beyond the walls out into the payment, as if it said nothing can stop a living thing that wants to be free.

In another instance we find description of the environment in the drawings of Masterji's daughter in the following lines:

*She had drawn the hibiscus plants that grew by  
the back of the compound, and the little's webs  
between their leaves, shiny and oval and*

*gliding over one another like parallel Milky  
Ways. (104)*

There is description of the environment, open space where there is no construction or residence. As Shah, the builder, parked his car in the car park, he sees a metal fence at Nariman point. Beyond it, was dark waters, at the end of which, he saw the lights of Navy Nagar; the southern tip of Mumbai.

*This fence was supposed to mark the  
land's end, but a promontory of debris,  
broken chunks of old buildings, granite,  
plastic, and Pepsi Cola had sneaked past  
it – the enterprising garbage pushed  
several feet into water.*

As greediness and corruption crept into the builder's mind, his fingers pulsed at the gaze of the land at Nariman point. Author describes the thoughts of his mind assuming that he says

*There is more and more land here, more land. A  
churning began in the promontory- plastic bags and  
pebbles started to ripple, as if mice were scurrying  
beneath them; then a sparrow shot out of the detritus.  
It's coming to life, Shah thought. (146)*

A homeless man was seen moving over the debris; he must have found a hole in the fence. He squatted and spat. Shah closed his eyes and prayed to the debris and to the man defecating in it. Every piece of land is taken under consideration by the builders followed by politicians, social workers and other authorized people of the society. Here it is seen that a common man is devoid of basic facilities and

there is sickness and unhygienic conditions in the society which keeps on growing. Thus giving rise to negligence of Humanity, dignity, kindness, honesty etc and other moral values in man's life.

Thus, Adiga is concerned with highlighting the relationships between literature and environment and how man's relationships with his physical environment are reflected in literature. Overexploitation of natural resources and man's disregard of the air, water and soil that sustain him have given rise to the question of the survival of both man and the planet. Aravind Adiga in his novel *Last Man in Tower* has depicted realism about human life, its survival in ever developing world and the ever continuing destruction of the environment, causing its detrimental effects on human values and culture. There are many instances and examples through which, the use of metaphors and symbolism, the unbalanced ecology is described in the *Last Man in Tower* which has proved the relationship, the connectedness between Literature and Nature.

## CHAPTER-6

### DYSTOPIAN ENVIRONMENT IN CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

Dystopian signifies the worst condition like that of inferno. And dystopian environment suggests the debased condition of natural, ecological and environment resources. The condition is brought into the universe by human actions, conscious or unconscious, direct or indirect. To reiterate the etymological connotation, bioregion is derived from the Greek word "bios" which means "life" and the French word "region", itself originated from Latin "regia" or "regere" which means "territory". Together it means a life-territory, a place defined by its life forms, its topography, and its biota. Animals, plants, human communities, the ancestral spirits, and deities, particular to the place of dwelling make the bioregion internally coherent. Present world under the influence of huge technological advancements and utilitarian attitude have almost brought havoc upon nature and its climate. Western philosophy believes man to be the most significant entity on the planet. This often leads to irreversible damage to other species as well as to our physical environment. Most of our technological advancements are the result of this human - centered approach. Not only scientists but also literary artists are addressing this issue with great concern.

Climate in a narrow sense is usually defined as the "average weather", or description of the mean and variability of relevant quantities, such as, temperature, precipitation and wind over a period of time, say thirty years, as defined by the World Meteorological Organization. A change of climate, which is attributed directly or indirectly to human

activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere, is considered as climate change. The climate system is defined by the dynamics and interactions of five major components: atmosphere, hydrosphere, land surface, and biosphere. Climate system dynamics are driven by both internal and external forcing, such as volcanic eruptions, solar variations, or human-induced modifications to the planet's balance. An example for this is emissions of greenhouse gases and alterations made in land-use by human beings. Greenhouse effect is the process in which the absorption of infrared radiation by the atmosphere warms the Earth. This may occur naturally, due to naturally occurring greenhouse gases, or to the enhanced greenhouse effect, which results from gases emitted as a result of human activities. Such gases that cause the greenhouse effect include Water vapour, carbon dioxide, nitrous oxide, methane and ozone. Climate change is affecting humanity and is almost reaching the extent of being incorrigible and life on Earth is bit by bit vanishing. Many species are almost extinct, the oceans are warming, plastic trash is killing wildlife and wars are looming over various parts of the world owing to droughts and scarcity of resources.

*The Death of Grass* (1956) by John Christopher is a novel about a virus that infects all forms of grass crops, such as rice, wheat, barley, oats and rye. The effect swiftly results in famine and anarchy. It is first recognized in China and called the "Chung-Li" virus. It hastily reaches across Asia. At this point, the western nations look with sympathy and pity on the affected Asians. They think that the virus can be controlled and destroyed. But then, post-war Britain is also taken under its grip creating chaos and dividing the country into criminal gangs. Post-apocalyptic world is here a world devoid of

order. Middle-class people are suffering breakdown and fighting an anxious battle for survival. The novel deals with the story of a family that attempts to escape London; which is to be bombed, along with all other major cities, to reduce the population so that remaining food supplies might last further. Western nation have also developed vaccines but they have proven ineffective. All crops and grasses in Europe including England are wiped off. The novel speculates on the social traumas arising from catastrophe and the unpleasant decisions faced by individual characters. There is an incident in the novel when some survivors locate a farmhouse that they decide to raid for supplies, with main characters, John, Roger and Pirrie attacking the property and killing the people inside:

*There was a distant crack, and at the same time the massive body turned inwards, like a top pulled by its string, and slumped towards them. ...John pulled the shot-gun away from under the body which lay over it. One barrel was still unfired. With a nod to Roger, he stepped over the dead or dying man and into the house. (Christopher, 109)*

J.G. Ballard's novel, *The Drowned World* (1962) is considered one of the best examples of early climate change fiction. It is set in a post-apocalyptic world following the melting of the ice-caps. The polar ice caps have melted and submerged much of the Northern hemisphere. It chiefly deals with London which is submerged under a dense lagoon, and which is covered in tropical vegetation as a result of a drastic shift in climate. A biologist in London sets off on a mapping expedition. The author uses the novel to explore the unconscious impulses of survivors of the humanity. As the world regresses, so does its inhabitants. The morals that held society together



disintegrate, and civilization unravels. The character of Riggs shows not only the out-datedness of conventional middle-class models of Englishness but it also represents, through his hopelessness, a much anticipated disintegration of all societal conditions. The novel ends with the character Kerans admitting to the fate, and accepting his ensuing journey:

*His time there had outlived itself, and the air-sealed suite with its constant temperature and humidity, its supplies of fuel and food, were nothing more than an encapsulated form of his previous environment, to which he had clung like a reluctant embryo to its yoke sac. The shattering of this shell, like the piercing doubts about his true unconscious motives set off by his near drowning in the planetarium, was the necessary spur to action, to his emergence into the brighter day of the interior, archaeopsychic sun. (146)*

The post-apocalyptic world in this novel is not a place where its inhabitants rebuild the structure in haste, rather it's a place with an alternative time-system where the unconscious drives of modernity can be examined without restraint. The world here is concurrently pre- and post-apocalyptic. The protagonists are situated in a space after the first disaster but before their own personal deaths, left in a visible „zone of transit“ (Ballard: 35).

Earth is considered as divine mother in Indian Philosophy. She nourishes humans, ensures preservation of species, and becomes furious when exploited, and punishes them severely. Ozone depletion, global warming, extinction of species, loss of bio-diversity are all human callousness that angers Mother Earth. As suggested by

western philosophy God created man in his own image and sent him to the Earth. This makes man ruler of the Earth. Indian philosophy renders no authority to men. India has been agricultural nation and hence dependence on natural forces like wind, water, air, fire and others. They therefore thought to appease different natural forces on which they depended to a great extent. The practice of worshipping Vedic deities that rule over these forces has been followed since ages.

Dystopian world in Christopher's *Death of Grass* is crowded with such events as rape, theft, misdistributed arms among masses, ruthlessness, and the actions of corrupt governments. Such happenings ensure that the post-crisis world of the future would not even be livable. The novel centers around two brothers, John and David Custance. David inherits their grandfather's farm nestled in a defendable northern valley. John is enjoying his comfortable London life when news of the devastating Chung-Li virus starts filtering from China. Men and women are killed for canned food items and blankets. Women are dehumanized and traumatized children are married. For a small piece of land men do not hesitate from killing entire families. John is selected head of a group of London refugees by a coin toss, and he freezes more and more as the novel progresses. Emptiness, colourlessness, death and stagnancies describe the novel.

In Ballard's *The Drowned World*, men of the future venture into a flooded London, intent on looting the city of its treasure. The environment is not a physical locale as much as it is “an ontological structure” where changes can transform or destroy our inner worlds” (Clarke, 2013: 19). Bacigalupi's *The Wind up Girl* (2009) is set during the time when the world runs out of fossil fuels. Bangkok is depicted

as one of only a few south-east Asian cities left, now below sea level and desperately holding off the rising waters with a series of spring-powered pumps. This novel deals with environmental issues and presents a calamitous future. Climate change has ravaged the American southwest. The characters search for the rights to control the area's water supply. Economic inequality has led the world to the destruction of the climate, leading further to almost devastation of the planet. Thailand's environment ministry works like a guerrilla force to ensure the country's survival, burning entire villages to the ground at the first sight of crop plagues.

The devastation of nature is linked to the tragic devaluation of man by these eco-conscious fictionists. Automation and the war machines are direct offshoots of modern development. This has devalued and dehumanized life on the planet. Through their writings the fictionists suggest a through revision of our value system and our priorities. They question the anthropocentric assumption that the non-human world exist for human welfare. Cheryll Glotfelty (1996) opines that man needs:

*To understand and critique the root cause of environmental degradation and formulate an alternative view of existence that will provide an ethical and conceptual foundation for right relations with the earth. (Glotfelty, xxi)*

The writers from different parts of the world have been raising awareness campaign against dystopian environment borne by human beings.

## CHAPTER-7

### ECOSOPHY OR DEEP ECOLOGY

Deep ecology is one of the wings of the ecocriticism theory. Deep ecology is the environmental philosophy and social movement based in the belief that humans must radically change their relationship to nature from one that values nature solely for its usefulness of human beings to one that recognizes that nature has an inherent value. Sometimes called an “ecosophy,” deep ecology offers a definition of the self that differs from traditional notions and is a social movement that sometimes has religious and mystical undertones. The phrase originated in 1972 with Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess, who, along with American environmentalist George Sessions, developed a platform of eight organizing principles for the deep ecology social movement. Deep ecology distinguishes itself from other types of environmentalism by making broader and more basic philosophical claims about metaphysics, epistemology, and social justice. It has existed in many societies as an ecological movement in practice, before it was theorized into an academic school of thought. It may be considered as an offshoot of eco-criticism, which deals with the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. It was theorized by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Naess in 1973 through his essay titled “The Shallow, and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement: A Summary”. He defines deep ecology as a protest against the anthropocentric models of existence in the European and American continents. David R. Keller, in his article titled “Deep Ecology (2008)”, explores the origins and the basic principles of deep ecology. He underlines the notion of Naess when

he writes, “Deep ecology is less a finished product than a continuing impassioned plea for the development of ecospheres, roots and branches, that merge non-anthropocentric core principles, the trunk” (Keller, 2008: 210). The principles of deep ecology point towards the needlessness of human intervention in maintaining this diversity. Unfortunately, says Naess, human beings have intervened in this equilibrium and have broken the balance of nature. This worsening interference must be checked by the conscious policy changes that must be implemented in anthropocentric societies that must become ‘biocentric’. In his work “How Deep is Deep Ecology?” George Bradford argues that the philosophy of deep ecology “has as its basis the inter-relatedness of all life, a biotic equality for all organisms, and a rejection of anthropocentrism, the belief that human beings are separate from, superior to, and more important than the rest of nature.” (Bradford, 1989: 8)

### **Ecosophy in Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea***

Ernest Hemingway’s renowned novel *The Old Man and the Sea* embodies one dimension of the ecocritical theory, that is, ‘deep ecology’ suggested by Arne Naess. It highlights belief that humans must radically change their relationship to nature from one that values nature solely for its usefulness of human beings to one that recognizes that nature has an inherent value. The major argument it suggests is that Santiago’s victory is not a success of the man over nature; rather a shared victory of man and nature. Santiago, the protagonist, undergoes a transformation in his relationship with the marlin (a fish he hooks), understanding it to be his enemy initially,

and later becoming his friend, brother, and finally himself metaphorically.

Ernest Hemingway's masterpiece narrates the story of the eternal challenges and conflicts that mankind has to endure to survive in a competitive world of adversities. But for the hero, the old Cuban fisherman Santiago, it is not just the struggle for survival; it is rather a measure of proving his 'manliness' to at least himself. Joseph Waldmeir, in his essay "Confiteor Hominem: Ernest Hemingway's Religion of Man", appreciates Hemingway when he writes that "Hemingway has finally taken the decisive step in elevating what might be called his philosophy of Manhood to the level of a religion (1957: 76)". Waldmeir's criticism of the idea of 'Manhood' in the novella may also be considered as a bone of contention in these times of renewed environmental concerns.

*The Old Man and the Sea* has been generally read in terms of the structural binaries that operate in the novella, the major one being the man versus the wild. The 'wild' here could refer to the sea, the marlin, the sharks, or even the universe considered as a whole. When the novel ends, Santiago, who carries the burden of the entire human race on his shoulders, is considered as having won the challenge by bringing the dilapidated skeleton of the marlin ashore. The fact that the marlin has been devoured almost completely by the sharks, and hence Santiago has come back empty-handed does not seem to matter in his success. This is echoed in the famous quotation from the novella that reads, "A man can be destroyed, but not defeated (103)."

The major argument is that Santiago's realization of the 'man' being

‘equal’ to the ‘wild’ is the cause of his success. In other words, Santiago’s success is not decided by the fishes that he manages to kill; it derives from the deep understanding he gains of the egalitarian working of the universe. This analysis is also an endeavor to demystify the religious image of Jesus Christ that is often superimposed upon Santiago. The Biblical allusion of Christ winning over the evil by his resurrection that happens after three days of his murder is replaced with the Biblical story of Jonah.

*The Old Man and the Sea* is prominently known for its anthropocentric characteristics; as a work of literature that establishes the victory of the human race over nature. Here, nature is symbolized by the sea, flying fish, the warbler, the marlin, the sharks, and even the Sargasso weeds which Santiago encounters while on his short and unexpected voyage. The return of Santiago back to the mainland is considered as the ultimate success that human beings earn after the bitter warfare that s/he leads against all adversaries, of whom most components (here) emerge from nature, or are part of it. The adventurous journeys that the author himself has made stand as proofs to such a bland interpretation of his character Santiago.

The physique of Santiago is described by Hemingway by acknowledging him to be a part of the sea herself. "Everything about him was old except his eyes and they were the same color as the sea and were cheerful and undefeated (6)". Santiago’s dreams are described: "He only dreamed of places now and of the lions on the beach. They played like young cats in the dusk and he loved them as he loved the boy (22)". Santiago’s dreams in his old age are different from the violent dreams of his youth. They grow more peaceful and

silent, which are symbolized by the calm beaches he visualized. The lions freely roaming in his dreams signify freedom and peace that he attains after a violent youth of victory, blood, and violent successes at sea. The final refuge that he envisions is that of nature and him being a glorious part of it. The interconnectedness of human beings to nature is reflected in these observations.

The friendship and sympathy that Santiago feels for the beings of the Sea is described as follows:

*He was very fond of flying fish as they were his principal friends on the ocean. He was sorry for the birds, especially the small delicate dark terns that were always flying and looking and almost never finding, and he thought, 'the birds have a harder life than we do except for the robber birds and the heavy strong ones. Why did they make the birds so delicate and fine as those sea swallows when the ocean can be so cruel?' (26)*

Santiago's experience at sea may be supplemented with the observation he makes of the creatures he finds in and around the sea water. For instance, when he is out in the sea, he observes a man-of-war bird circling, and understands the presence of dolphins nearby. The sea and its beings turn out to be Santiago's teachers and escorts, guiding him through adverse conditions, and aiding him to get his catch. The greatest among his teachers is the sea herself. Metaphorically thought of as the universe, Santiago "always thought of the sea as 'la mar' which is what people call her in Spanish when they love her. The old man always thought of her as feminine and as



something that gave or withheld great favors, and if she did wild or wicked things it was because she could not help them.” (26-27)

The companionship offered by nature to its inhabitants, and the type of bondage it creates amongst them is depicted vividly in the novel. When the old man is lonely at sea, he finds companionship in a warbler that comes to rest on the skiff. Until the bird resumes its flight, Santiago keeps talking to her. He even tries to make friends with the flying fish and the dolphins; and even makes keen observations about the seaweeds for time pass, as the fish keeps hauling the skiff in its direction. But the best example of companionship may be found between Santiago and the marlin. In the absence of Manolin, it is the fish that gives company to Santiago. Though they are supposedly enemies, circumstances bring them together. Though they do not see each other, they are bonded with each other. This unusual companionship lies in the core of the novel, and explains the deep ecological aspects that may be unearthed from the novel. It needs a description of the marlin to completely comprehend the depth of this companionship.

The marlin which gets hooked in Santiago's line is as much a protagonist as is Santiago. The fish is huge in size; "he is two feet longer than the skiff" (61). There is also an elaborate description about the marlin's confidence and perseverance in dragging the skiff in his direction and not yielding to the trap for three whole days. It is this long time period that creates a sense of affection between the two protagonists of the novel, Santiago and the marlin. *The Old Man and the Sea* may be read as a novel of transformation; this transformation is very gradual; and the major characters affecting this transformation are Santiago and the marlin. Initially, Santiago is portrayed as an old

man who is poor, and out of food and money for his survival. He has gone eighty-four days without having caught even a single fish, and is considered *salao* (unlucky). Hence he is attributed to thinking of the marlin who gets hooked in his line to be his enemy. Santiago longs for company to keep himself alive and in good spirits, which he eventually finds in the marlin. In a way, Santiago could be understood as replacing the marlin for Manolin, the young boy whom he misses throughout the journey. The three levels of transformation undergone in the relationship between Santiago and the marlin are as follows: from an enemy to a friend, from a friend to a brother, and finally, from a brother to his own self. Initially, Santiago starts conversing with the marlin only as a means to entertain himself, and as a normal human act to tempt the marlin into the hook. "Come on", the old man said aloud, "Make another turn. Just smell them. Aren't they lovely? Eat them good now, and then there is the tuna. Hard and cold and lovely. Don't be shy fish, eat them (39)".

The sympathy that Santiago feels for the marlin slowly turns into empathy. It is his long-term experience in the sea which makes Santiago assume that the fish that has been hooked is a marlin. When he realizes that it was impossible for him to drag the marlin into his skiff, he slowly starts feeling sympathy for the fish. He imagines the marlin to be huge in size and in strength. Santiago gets only a sudden peek at the marlin when it jumps up for the fraction of a second. The only force that keeps Santiago confident enough to not give up and keep trying is his intelligence. "I wish I was the fish, he thought, with everything he has against only my will and my intelligence (62)". But then he realizes that the wisdom and dignity of the fish in enduring through the toil of life makes him more worthy than most human

beings. "But are they worthy to eat them? No, of course not. There is no one worthy of eating him from the manner of his behavior and his great dignity (74)". A move from the anthropocentric attitude to the bio-centric attitude may be observed from this instance.

One of the key factors that Arne Naess emphasizes in his principles of deep ecology is the acceptance and empathy that each living being must have for its fellow beings. This understanding is a hallmark of the friendship that develops between Santiago and the marlin. Santiago says at one point, "I love you and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends" (52). Further, Santiago befriends a small warbler that finds rest on his boat amidst flying, telling him, "Take a good rest, small bird. then go in and take your chance like any man or bird or fish" (53). He also invites the bird to take its time before flying off, begging pardon for not being able to serve him better, "Stay at my house if you like, bird. I am sorry I cannot hoist the sail and take you in with the small breeze that is rising. But I am with a friend" (53). The friend that he mentions is the marlin. Thus, in a gradual relationship that develops between the marlin and Santiago transforms from sheer enmity to a friendship.

From friendship, Santiago slowly moves one step further in his understanding of the marlin. The thought occurs to him while he has the tuna to quench his hunger. He thinks of the hunger of the fish and wishes that he could feed him, since he was his own brother (57). Later, when one of Santiago's hands cramps, he thinks to himself: "There are three things that are brothers: the fish and my two hands" (62). When instances of tiredness and failure appear, he gives confidence to himself assuring that he will kill the fish for sure, "in all its greatness and glory" (64). To this he adds, "Although it is

unjust” (64). This realisation that Santiago reaches is, in fact, a turning point in the novella, as it awakens a feeling of brotherhood in him for a creature that was initially his enemy.

As Santiago recounts his past experiences, he thinks, “man is not much beside the great birds and beasts” (66). In his final attempt to kill the fish, it gives him a hard time.

*You are killing me, fish, the old man thought. But you have a right to. Never have I seen a greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or nobler thing than you, brother. Come on and kill me. I do not care who kills who. (92)*

And soon after he kills the fish, he admits to himself that he had killed his brother, and now has to do the slave work. Once he pulls the fish close to the skiff, he thinks of his desire to touch and feel the marlin. It is not his desire to weigh his catch that makes him want to feel the fish. "I think I felt his heart when I pushed on the harpoon shaft the second time (95)". The old man's relationship with the marlin becomes so intense that he feels as if he has murdered his own brother, or perhaps himself. There is a constant feeling of remorse at having killed the fish. At some point during his return, Santiago feels one with the fish he killed. "He did not like to look at the fish anymore since he had been mutilated. When the fish had been hit it was as though he himself were hit (103)".

Santiago is troubled with remorse after he has killed the fish. He considers whether he has committed a sin by killing the marlin. The concept of sinning is constantly discussed in the novel, in the consciousness of Santiago. He weighs it in his mind and tries to calm

himself down with his philosophy of life.

*He thought much and he kept on thinking about sin. You did not kill the fish only to keep alive and to sell for food, he thought. You killed him for pride and because you are a fisherman. You loved him when he was alive and you loved him after. If you love him, it is not a sin to kill him. Or is it more?*  
(105)

With a delicate poke on established religion, Hemingway portrays Santiago as dismissing the idea of sinning, and replacing it with the natural law of life. “Do not think about sin. It is much too late for that and there are people who are paid to do it. You were born to be a fisherman and the fish was born to be a fish” (105). Santiago also consoles himself thinking that it was in self-defence that he killed the fish, and “everything kills everything else in some way” (106). So much of self-consolation is required on the part of Santiago to justify his act of killing the fish. This regret itself is unlikely in other fishermen, who are anthropocentric, unawares. This brings out the deep ecological understanding that takes shape in Santiago through his adventure with the marlin in the sea.

Thus, deep ecology stresses the importance of understanding the inherent worth that lies in each living being. It also emphasizes the need for mutual understanding and co- existence of strengths. Santiago’s transforming relationship with the marlin ranging from an enemy to a friend to a brother, and finally to himself is the core finding of the deep ecological reading of the novel. Instead of human companions, nature and its inhabitants row him into a new horizon, where he overcomes his state of shame.

## CHAPTER-8

### CONCLUSION

Nature has been a sole witness of human civilization starting from the primitive to this era of scientific & technological advancement. Though the scientific developments have made us efficient with the latest technologies by creating an ultra-modern society, it has never been able to surpass nature, whose innumerable mysteries are still left unfolded and beyond our understanding. Global warming, melting of glaciers, continuous emission of greenhouse gases, pollution and many such disasters are creating major setbacks for the ecological environment in this twenty first century. It is this alarming crisis of ecological imbalance that has prompted me to carry out my research in this direction. As we are familiar with the fact that literature and art mirrors the society in its realistic form and help us in the revelation that there has been a long tradition of study of nature and human relationships with it. It would also be perfect to say that eco-criticism is a study of the interdependence of the human relations with nature, so making use of the eco-critical approaches and applying it on literary aspects will be an attempt to once again remind of that magical relationship of the human beings with nature.

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