

ANALYSING ECO CRITICISM IN ENGLISH LITERATURE THROUGH THE
WORKS OF RALPH WALDO EMERSON AND KIRAN DESAI

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Abstract

Environmental crisis is a question that cannot be overlooked in today's world. We being trapped in the vicious cycle of happenings like changes in the rainfall pattern, changes in the climatic condition, global warming, rise in the sea levels on one side, and a series of catastrophes like earthquake, floods, droughts etc. on the other, there is a distinct realisation that it is high time we think about extending a concern for environment around us. Eco criticism or eco critical theory or Green Studies as a school of thought emphasises on understanding the human perception of Nature through the medium of literature that existed during the times. Its mission is to contrive the correspondence between the Physical Environment and literature. As it takes an interdisciplinary point of view by the works of authors, researchers, and poets in the context of environmental issues and nature, one can say that Eco criticism also sometimes can propose a solution to the current environmental issues. This paper attempts to look at the eco centric values of humans by studying the works of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Kiran Desai.

Keywords: Eco Criticism, English Literature, Eco centric values.

Introduction

The term "eco criticism" came into the big picture by the publication of two seminal works, both published in the mid-1990s: "The Ecocriticism Reader", edited by Cheryl Glotfelty and Harold Fromm, and "The Environmental Imagination", by Lawrence Buell. As Cheryl Glotfelty says in the Introduction to *The Ecocriticism Reader*, "Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender-conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts" (viii), environmental critics explore how nature and the natural world are imagined through literary texts. It is an interdisciplinary, which urges and collaborates between scientists, writers, literary critics, anthropologists, historians, etc asking us to examine ourselves and the world around us, critiquing the way that we represent, interact with, and construct the environment, both "natural" and manmade. At the heart of ecocriticism, many maintain, what is "a commitment to environmentality from whatever critical vantage point" (Buell 11).

Ecocriticism as a literary theory rereads the existing works of literature to bring out the environmental elements, if any, and tries to study the inter relation between the humankind and the physical environment.

ECOCRITICISM AND GREEN STUDIES