

Essay on eco-criticism

Technology, Development



The development of eco-criticism has been attributed to the increased diversification in the field of literature and cultural studies. Various artists have presented issues affecting the environment, as well as providing reflections of the real life. Eco-criticism has been developed in explaining the relation of human being with the nature. In addition, it provides an illustration of the role of language, art play and language in explaining the relation between the human being and the nature. Eco-criticism is based on explaining the relationship between human beings and the nature, and it attempts to explain how modernization and globalization have transformed and changed it (Heisie 56). These have been some of the basic issues that have made eco-criticism among the most rapidly growing in the field of literary studies.

Eco-criticism has been inspired by various ranges of ecological movements, which explore the means through which we establish, imagine and portray the existing relationships between self aware human beings and the environment of their inhabitation. For example, some of the animations presented by Thoreau, Disney and various BBC documentaries and various other animations that have been developed, in explaining the relationship between human being and nature. For example, animations have been developed creating volumes of development traces establishing the movements and explaining various concepts and aspects, which have continued to occupy eco-critics (Heisie 60). These issues and concepts presented by eco-critics include pollution, wilderness, apocalypse, dwelling, animals and earth among others.

Eco-criticism has developed over three decades emerging as a literary that

explains and studies how human beings relate to non-human nature and the environment. In all periods, eco-criticism literature has been not only placed emphasis on eco-centric and environmental literature. However, it has been it has been associated with all literal works setting the environment, which has taken a deeper meaning. There have been various questions that have risen with the development of eco-criticism. For example, questions have been raised on the effect of a shift to ecological perception on how the human beings relate with the earth. In addition, there have been questions on the question on the effect of authors and artists imputing values and creating assumptions in presenting the non-human, as well as the environment (Rigby). Questions have also been raised on how one can avoid binary oppositions in explaining the human nature and their relationship with the non-human nature and the environment.

With the increased development of eco-criticism, there has been an increasing change in the theoretical approach, which has grown to create a perception that it has grown out of the traditional approach of literature. According to eco-critics, there has not been developed a universal model and approach in reading, studying and presenting eco-criticism. However, it has been presented that eco-critics are engaged in various activities, which include reading and studying literature from an eco-centric point of view. In addition, they present and apply ecological views in explaining and presenting the natural world (Johnson). Their focus is on nonfiction and environmental writing and arts that feature nature and illustrates appreciation for ethical positions and behaviors towards nonhuman nature. The issues being raised in eco-criticism are rapidly growing in the field of

literary studies. Initially in the 1980's, there were various scattered publications and projects explaining the relationship between literature and environment. These publications led to the formation of (ASLE), the Association of the Study of Literature and Environment in a western literature convention in 1992. This led to proliferation numerous works, arts and publications on eco-criticism, marking the growth of the literary studies. The intensified growth of eco-criticism can be attributed to the increasing urgency of environmental problems and the high interconnections between societies across the globe (Heisie 59). This has led to the explosion of writings, articles, books and increased academic interest in the field of eco-criticism.

The development of literary theory from the 1960 to the early 1990's under the influence French philosophies of language and literary critics has contributed enormously to the development of eco-criticism. During the period of developing the literary theory, there was a renewed approach in addressing literary questions, presentation of textuality, historical discourse, identity, narrative and subjectivity. This was a shift from the fundamental skeptical perspective, to a new approach, which emphasized on multiple disjunctures between various forms of representation and realities purported to be referred and presented (Rigby). There was an increased tendency to represent nature in the sociocultural context, which served to explain various ideological claims of specific social groups.

Evolution of eco-criticism was not gradual as an academic wing of any particular political movement. Rather its emergence is attributed to the period when environmentalism had turned to a vast field of various

converging and conflicting projects, which gave led to the development of other humanistic disciplines, which include, environmental philosophy and history. In addition, eco-criticism has resonated from various different names, which has been associated with the study. For example, critics have used various names such as environmental criticism, literary environmental studies, literary ecology, environmentalism and green cultural studies in reference to eco-criticism. The convergence of thought was attributed to the perceived relevance of biology, which opened up the conceptual space for eco-criticism. This led to the entry of sociobiological approaches, which had been duped in the 1970's (Heisie 58). This was used in answering various controversial questions due to high criticism of scholars and scientist on inclusion of sociobiological factors in the study of eco-criticism.

Eco-criticism has a high allegiance as the scientific study of nature, providing an illustration of the relationship between political wars and establishment of better ways of inhabiting the world. However, there have been various underlying issues of realism and representation, which have led to the increased science wars, and have continued to pose a challenge to the eco-critical theory. The increased diversity of cross-disciplinary and political influences, which led to the development of eco-criticism have posed a challenge in summarizing (Rigby). Even with the increased divergence of views, eco-critics also long for a sense of shared community ideals. However, the increased recent critiques and ripostes are indications of a vibrant and rapidly increasing field.

The engagement of globalization and modernization with eco-criticism has partly been shaped by the ambivalence of environmentalists towards

scientific inquiry. There have been views that science has been among the root causes of environmental degradation. This has been from the view that it has provided the means through which nature can be exploited more rapidly than it was previously in the pre-modern times (Heisie 54). However, there have been views also that social legitimating of environmental politics and their own aspects and insights into the state of nature are highly dependent on science. This ambivalence and diverging views in eco-criticism have led to diverging views and perceptions on how sciences should inform cultural inquiry.

There has been an increased tension between constructivists and realists approaches and more specifically on issues concerning how individual perception on the environment is shaped by the cultural factors and the mediation between language and literature. A modernist eco-criticism strand privileged philosophies and modes of writing, which tend to transcend division between nature and culture subject, body and environment and subject an object. Therefore, there has been a divergence of views on the approaches used in the modern and pre-modern times in expression of eco-criticism.

The development of eco-criticism in the 1990's has been attributed to the questioning by most English departments on the reason behind poor representation of nature writing. Henry David Thoreau has been among the most exception writer and artist; his writings include the *More Day to Dawn: Thoreau's Walden for the Twenty-first Century*. This was followed by a series of writing from various other writers leading to the development eco-criticism (Johnson 7).

Some eco-critics argue that isolating the environment as a separate phenomenon revitalizes not only the sovereignty over nature but additionally revitalizes inequities entailed in sovereignty. Eco-criticism has facilitated documentation of various issues and problems in alienation, identity and ecological landscapes delivering an eco-critical study of both the present and past cultures. Therefore, eco-criticism has developed with age, where in the past it had been disregarded. However, with the development of literary theory from 1960's to the early 1990's eco-criticism was boosted tremendously. In addition, there have been views in various English departments that nature studies had been poorly represented, which led to a renewed focus on ecological, environmental and nature studies, which later led to the proliferation of various writings on eco-criticism.

Works Cited

Heisie, Ursula K. *The Hitchhiker Guide to Eco-criticism*. Stanford: Stanford University, 2012.

Johnson, Loretta. "Greening the Library: The Fundamentals and Future of Ecocriticism." *Eco-Criticism and Literary Studies* (2009).

Rigby, Kate. "ECOCRITICISM." *Introducing Criticism In the Twenty First Century* (2001): 151-78.