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To the study of some prominent poets with ecocritical lens

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Abstract

Ecocriticism is a relatively young academic discipline that studies literature and the environment in connection to one another. An examination of environmental themes in Indian English poetry is the overarching goal of this research. Poems written by Indians in English and their varied perspectives on environmental protection are the subject of this study's ecocritical examination. Ecocriticism refers to the field that studies how literature and the environment are interconnected. Landscapes, flora, fauna, and natural resources are all part of ecological research.

Keywords: Literary, literature, cultural and psychology

Introduction

Human culture is interdependent on, and both shaped by, the natural environment; this is a central tenet of ecological critique. Green cultural studies, eco-poetics, and environmental literary criticism are just a few of the common terms used to describe this emerging field of literary analysis. The relationships among authors, texts, and "the world" are the primary foci of literary criticism. For the vast majority of literary theorists, "the world" is shorthand for society. The term "the world" is broadened in ecocriticism to include the whole biosphere. When it comes to literary criticism, ecocriticism places an emphasis on the planet Earth. It has expanded to include a theoretical framework for understanding the complex interplay between natural, cultural, and supernatural events, as well as the use of ecological principles in literary analysis.

Environmental critics argue that the environmental crisis presents significant aesthetic and ethical challenges, and that literature and language have the power to communicate values that have far-reaching effects on the environment. It was in the postmodern period that a new school of critical thought known as Ecocriticism emerged, thanks to the proliferation of environmentally concerned authors. In the field of literary criticism, it is a relatively new yet quickly evolving idea. It has recently grown in prominence as an important critical method in the field of contemporary ecological literature. While ecocriticism does highlight the

'harmony' between humans and the natural world, it also discusses the devastation that modernization has wrought on the environment, the majority of which is attributable to humans. Setting, environment, and location all take on new connotations in ecocriticism. Research by eco-criticism seeks to alter humankind's relationship with the planet via an ecological lens. Ecocriticism is a new theoretical movement that is breaking away from the old ways of looking at literature. Here, the critic investigates the work of art through the lenses of the local, the global, the physical, the historical, and the natural. Literature reviewed via an ecocritical lens often draws on expertise in several fields, including ecology, sociology, and the natural and social sciences.

Literature Review

Adkoli, Bharati. (2024) ^[1], this study traces the history of environmental literature and ecocriticism and uses examples to show how many literary works across genres and historical periods have shown environmental concern and care. In addition, the article tries to shed light on the reformative impact it had on society as large. Emerging tendencies in approaches to Environmental Literature and Eco-criticism are reflected upon in the paper's concluding sections.

Hebbar P, Vikas *et al.* (2024) ^[2], this article delves into eco criticism in all its facets, following its history from its

origins in environmentalism to its present status as an evolving discipline that unites cultural studies, literature, and ecology. Highlighting eco criticism's relevance in today's academic scene, it delves into the field's history, foundational concepts, and developing tendencies.

Walia, Rishabh *et al.* (2022) ^[7], although eco-criticism is a new school of thought within literary criticism, it is more than just a subset of that school. This form of literary analysis is feasible because "green" literature exists and is becoming more important as a response to the impending ecocatastrophe that the modern world faces.

Sahoo, Anjali. (2025) ^[4], the study is built around a comprehensive literature analysis that delves into 10 main topics. These themes include cultural and societal perspectives, nature, environment, and wilderness, as well as the interconnectedness and interdependence of man and nature. The findings show how different eco-critical approaches and perspectives matter. Multidisciplinary domains, including management studies, are impacted by this comprehension. In the future, methods will stress the need of diverse research frameworks that include several perspectives. With this addition, the intricate relationship between poetry and nature may be better understood.

Radhakrishnan, Ganesh V (2025) ^[5], the study examines the role of literature in developing environmental ethics, promoting action, and strengthening the bond between people and the natural world from an ecocritical perspective. In addition, the article follows the literary history of environmental discourse from Romanticism to modern eco-fiction, discussing its progress along the way. It delves into the ways literature encourages sustainable activities, challenges anthropocentric worldviews, and reflects ecological worries. Also included in the examination is literary criticism's function in bringing together literature and ecological research and drawing attention to environmental issues.

Poetical Works and Their eco-critical aspects

Nissim Ezekiel: Implications of Ecology

Poems by Nissim Ezekiel include a broad range of topics, including love, loneliness, human frailties, superstitions, and shortcomings. However, in works like "Squirrel", "Sparrows", and "Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher", he seems to take an eco-critical and biocentric stance.

'Night of the Scorpion' paints a vivid, appropriate, and true picture of superstition in these words. The poet likens the behavior of the villagers and neighbours who had come to see the poet's mother to a swarm of flies; in their haste to "buzz" God's name in the hopes of saving her life and warding off the "Evil One".

In an effort to paralyze the Evil One, the peasants swarmed in like a swarm of flies and buzzed the Name of God a hundred times.

Through the use of lanterns and candles

Conjuring enormous serpentine silhouettes in the mud-covered walls

Their efforts to locate him were fruitless.

Their mouths clinked together.

"Poet, Lover, Birdwatcher" is a poem that is featured in the 1965 collection *The Exact Name*. Aesthetically pleasing and

analytically jarring, this poem examines human conduct in relation to the natural world. Her prose is clear, insightful, and critical, but it is also directed enough to condemn humankind's treatment of the natural world. Without sugarcoating or otherwise skirting the issue, the language is straightforward and addresses it head-on.

The scope of "Poet, Lover and Birdwatcher" includes both human and non-human beings in addition to the natural world. The poet asserts that since birds and ladies stand for nature, it is hard to quickly recognize and appreciate them, and it is also impossible to grasp them in a rushed or forced manner.

Environmental Criticism in the Poetry of Toru Dutt: A Poetic Opposition to Contemporary Trends

A broader and more biocentric perspective on the natural world emerges when people realize nature's importance to all forms of life. Poems written in Indian English often depict the interplay and reciprocity between people and the natural world. As a poet of the pre-independence period, Toru Dutt's many poems reveal her sensitivity and understanding of the world around her. Her exceptional works, such as *Baugmaree*, *Sita*, and *the Lotus*, reflect her devotion to the natural world. In her heartfelt poetry "Our Casuarina Tree," Toru Dutt expresses her affection for the tree since it brings back fond memories of her youth.

Designed to leave deep scars, like a massive Python
slithering over the rough trunk,
Right up to its peak, where the stars are,
No other tree could survive the climbing of this creeper,
which is the subject of Toru Dutt's poem "Our Casuarina
Tree" (Poem Hunter).

Toru Dutt uses the tree as a metaphor for Indian heritage and culture. People go through terrible suffering as a result of exploiting society's natural resources for selfish gain. It seems as if Nature, like the casuarina tree, is bemoaning the transgression of rules:

As if the waves were lapping on a shingle beach,
What is that low, dirge-like murmur?
Toru Dutt's *Our Casuarina Tree*, featured in *Poem
Hunter*, is the tree's mournful discourse.

Clearly, trees play an essential role in human survival. Because of the feelings evoked by them, sacred trees such as peepal and neem are worshipped and venerated. Since she was a little girl, Toru Dutt had a deep connection to the outdoors. Her natural affinity for the outdoors blossomed during her time at the rural residence in Calcutta's *Baugmaree* and *Rambagan*. The stunning natural environment of *Rambagan* inspired her creative spirit and gave rise to her poetic inclinations. Trees, gardens, rivers, brooks, hills, woods, and so on are all vividly depicted in her impromptu poetry. 'Ballads', 'Savitri', and 'Sindhu' are all filled with vivid descriptions of nature. 'Buttoo', 'Sita', and 'The Lotus', as well as 'Baugmaree', 'and 'Casuarina Tree', all showcase her poetic sensibility and keen observation of the natural world.

Toru Dutt's devotion to the natural world began from an early age. Toru, who lived between *Rambagan* in *Calcutta*

and the rural estate at Baumaree, intensified her inherent passion for nature. The picturesque Rambagan setting stoked her artistic impulses, but the garden at Baumaree, being much more picturesque and lovely, gave her imagination a boost. The many natural items served as a wonderful inspiration for her creative process.

In her many letters, she describes her undying devotion to the natural world, gushing over her favorite plants, animals, fruits, and trees. "I wish I could send you a basket of fruits of the season," she writes, surrounded by allusions to her garden, home, and the birds who inhabit there. Your eyes would be delighted! Yellow or vermilion mangoes, crimson leeches, white jumrools, and deep violet jams".

Toru stands out as a poet of nature because of her attuned poetic sensibility and careful study of the outward manifestations of nature, such as its sights, sounds, and colors. Her poetry about nature is largely influenced by the Baumaree Garden House. The picturesque splendor of the garden is captured in her renowned sonnet "Baumaree", which she used to immortalize this home and garden. The poetess's impromptu joy in the midst of a sea of greenery is the only subject of this nature poetry.

Toru portrays nature in her Indian context with an almost romanticized quality in her poetry. Therefore, she may be considered the first major Indo-Aryan nature poet. "Ballads" devotes a considerable amount of space to beautiful and lyrical depictions of the outdoors. Her poetry on nature often includes imagery of trees, rivers, flowers, meadows, woodlands, hills, brooks, and the like. Natural sceneries in works such as "Savitri" (two woodland scenes), "Sindhu" (sunset scene), "Buttoo" (description of different trees and flowers), "Sita" (hermitage scene), etc., are noteworthy. Her works of nature poetry include "The Lotus," "Baumaree," and "Our Casuarina Tree".

"The observations of nature of the two writers are also different," Padmini Sen Gupta remarks while comparing Toru Dutt and Sarojini Naidu as nature poets. For example, in contrast to Toru's account of trees, Sarojini seemed to always assume perhaps as a result of Gose's counsel that everything she depicted must be Indian. For Toru, the most important thing is that the trees she loves are Indian. Sarojini insists on painting an oriental backdrop while describing the trees. According to Toru:

"On the other hand, the range...

In the direction of bamboos to the east when the moon
You can see the white lotus blossoming through the
spaces between them.

Into a silver cup. I may fall head over heels
Obsessed with all things lovely, or just staring
In the primordial paradise, in awe.

Tears welled up in Sarojini's Champak bouquet as she:
Petals of carvan jade, ivory petals, amber petals,
Enduring the enchantment of your luscious deliciousness
Woodland, meadow, and glade.
Doomed in your fleeting splendor
To wither and vanish away!

In Toru, nature reigns supreme. However, compared to Wordsworth or Shelley, she is hardly a brilliant poet of nature. Nature is her tool for creating beauty. Seeing champaks and Kokilas makes her heart skip a beat. Even she doesn't look at the natural world via a scientific lens. She

has an eye for beauty and is a romantic. Her detailed and evocative descriptions of nature are many. An exquisite depiction of a sunset over an Indian lake, for instance, deserves your whole attention:

The last rays of sunlight reached the smooth surface,
As the winds stir and play,
They stretch out like daggers of fire.
The border is adorned with osiers and willows,
Along with red and purple blooms.
In the midst of the delicate greens border, leaned down

Lotus lifted its blossomed crown.

As the light dwindled, a veil fell over the tree,
The sea, and the flower, and the twilight pale
Descended over them hour by hour.
"Sindhu," pages 129–130.

Another panoramic view of nature from Savitri depicting the jubilant wedding procession through Madra's streets is below:

"Beyond the wall, beyond every dwelling,
Then there were verdant gardens and neat hedgerows,
Little brooklets meandered past farms.
Overflowing with molten silver,
Take a last look at the setting sun,
Across scowling slopes, across uncultivated meadows,
Finally, the sight of tightly packed leaves appears.

The poetess had an acute awareness of the natural world, particularly its hues and sounds. Her poetry such as "Baumaree", "The Lotus", and "Our Casuarina Tree" unequivocally support this sentiment. In the song "Buttoo", the following list of natural objects is provided:

"My, what magnificent trees!
The somber Saul that is a sight to see
A towering pillar, the betel nut
Crowned with delicate branches,
Widespread, the light-leaved tamarind
A bitter Neem plant with a pale, weak aroma,
Beautiful as a bride, the seemul
As a bouquet of ruby-red blossoms,
Here we go again.
The swaying bamboo branch that
'Neath bulbuls in the south wind
A black ring that is near to the mango-tope,
Nesting place of the noisy crows and rooks,
In addition to the champak and Bok, the South Sea Pine
The hanging flower nagesser
The woodland vine, which clings to everything and
gives strength, is like an ear ring.
The renowned sirish of sanscrit music,
Whose garments rustic girls adore
The powerful and gigantic peepul,
The matted-hair bramble,
Everything said above, plus many more
Crowned with a golden halo or a crimson helmet,
The young woman, adorned with a verdant tiara,
Stood before the brown shadows of the twilight.
In "Buttoo," on pages 115–116.

So, only in "Buttoo" we find allusions to a plethora of trees: Saul, betel nut, tamarind, neem, seemul, bamboo, mango-tope, champak, nagesur, sirish, peepul, bramble, green tiara, rose, and many more.

As Sindhu and his parents pass away in "Sindhu," the setting of dusk seems suitable. The scene of growing night is painted with stunning detail:

Hour by hour, oh so delicately
As the light dwindled, a shroud came over the tree, the
surf, and the flower.
The waning light of day continued.
As it descended farther and further,
In the night sky, stars twinkled,
The nightingale singing in the meadow
"Raisd here, before the scream."

"Near Hastings", "The Lotus", "Baugmaree", and "Our Casuarina Tree" are some of Toru Dutt's most well-known nature poetry. What stands out about these poems is their sensuality and their sensitivity to color. Her use of language in "Baugmaree" gives the impression that she is a landscape painter and evokes Keatsian picturesqueness:

"Our garden is surrounded by a sea of vegetation,
But rather than a flat expanse of monotonous green,
All of the colors here have striking contrasts.
Abounding are the beautiful, light-green tamarinds.
Nestled among the clusters of verdant mango trees,
As pillars of gray, palm trees emerge from the ground,
The seemuls droop over the picturesque waters.
Vibrant and shocking, like the sound of a trumpet.
But when the moon is out, there's nothing more beautiful
than the eastern bamboo range.
Observes the white lotus blossom as it transforms via
those openings
Into a silver cup. I may fall head over heels
Obsessed with all things lovely, or just staring
In awe of a primordial Eden.

Toru Dutt's "Sita" is a word picture of a landscape:-

"A thick, dark jungle, where the light of day seldom
reaches
And in the middle, on a cleared place, flowers will grow.
Stunning blossoms on trailing vines that envelop
In a serene transparent lake, surrounded by towering
trees
While the white swans float, the brakes make a buzzing
sound.
There are herds of wild deer that run, and the peacock
sings its song.
Patches of golden waving grain shimmer there;
The poet anchorite rests peacefully there.

The Emotional and Intellectual Representation of Nature in the Poetry of Keki N Daruwalla

Nature and landscapes are common themes in Daruwalla's poetry. Nature and human emotion are brought together in a manner that is very unique in his poems. Poet Keki N Daruwalla is known for her vivid descriptions of dramatic settings. He is known as a poet who specializes in

landscapes. Although Daruwalla's sense of landscape mostly emphasizes the picturesqueness of the sites, it also brings attention to the harshness of the environment.

The poet employs allegories that pertain to the natural world, the human body, animals, and fantastical realms. By putting the scenes into words, he transports his readers on an emotional, intellectual, and moral journey. By paraphrasing the poet, he displays his preoccupation with natural scenery. The landscape is the foundation upon which my poetry rest. I want to show how poetry connects to landscapes on two levels: the physical and the spiritual. The environment isn't just a backdrop for our senses; it's a path to enlightenment, the focal point of our spiral (Two Decades of Indian Poetry 21). Poetry like "Mandwa" which focuses on nature and water is exceptional. He uses a wide array of visual symbols to portray the natural world. In the coastal area, summers meant scorching temperatures and what seemed like "an egg-yolk frying in the sky." Fish scales also littered the beach, giving it the name "The beach white with fish-scales." In his poetry, Daruwalla deftly conveys all of these aspects.

Whenever I go anywhere, it's usually winter. Not in this case.

While the islands burn and the water churns, looking like an egg yolk cooking in the sky is the sun.

This blessed stretch of beach, which is white with fish-scales,

Encircled by isolated islets that bob around like shards of a cracked carafe. (In the past)

Poem "Boat-Ride along the Ganga" explores the river's dual existences. The Ganga is a goddess, a mother, a source of life, and a gateway to heaven in Hinduism. Daruwalla, a poet of Zoroastrian faith, presents another perspective and expresses the gloomy reality of the river. He discovers decomposition, illness, and corpses along the riverbanks. As he and his partner boater go upstream in the dark, he expresses his remorse over what he sees in the river and on its banks via the poem's lines.

A ghat-amphitheatre gradually emerges.

Similar to a fantasy in which a sick night flower blooms alone around sunset.

Emerging like strange mushrooms, palm-leaf parasols

Marvel at deserted platforms. (97) Is

This is what the speaker means when they say, "I listen avidly to his legend-talk/ striving to forget what I changed to see: / the sewer-mouth trained like a cannon / on the river's flank" (97). As he rows, he shows that he doesn't care about what he sees. These lines convey his discontent and despair. His lack of knowledge, his religious background, or his misunderstanding of Hindu traditions might all be to blame. Bruce King claims that he is not always content with the fatalism, traditionalism, and indifference seen in Hindu culture (as cited in R.A. Singh 82).

Sarojini Naidu: Innate Fervor in her Poems

An acute awareness of the inherent aestheticism of nature endowed Nightingale of India Sarojini Naidu with a natural tendency toward romanticism and a paradigm of the

Renaissance in her understanding of nature. Her most eloquent depiction of the natural world is in "The Sons of Springtime." Aside from being delicious, aromatic, and alluring, spring is full with the comforting love energy.

The splendor of India's flora and fauna captivates her, and she describes plants such as "crimson gulmohars", "champa boughs", "lotus buds", cassia forests, and "boughs of tamarind". There are hills, rivers, "water-lily pools," a variety of birds and animals, and natural woodlands to explore. It was her belief that "a thing of beauty is a joy forever" that defined beauty. The beauty of her surroundings seems to inspire her, as it did Wordsworth, and she takes pleasure in nature.

Everything she says is perfectly articulated in her works. In her poems, she vividly portrays and re-creates the qualities of love in these natural surroundings, as well as the splendor of life and the environment, and the lovely cadence of movement and song found in nature. The sensory experiences of the breathtaking and ever-changing natural world enchant her. Her exquisite sensitivity reacts more emotionally than logically to sensory sensations from outdoors, and she has a sharp eye for detail (Nair 99).

As a song, "*Village Song*" provides a refuge from the mundane, stereotypical world. Going outdoors gives her a little break from the monotony of daily life. Romantic elaborations on many natural topics characterize her poems about nature. An example of this kind of poetry is "*Village Song*," which presents an idealized portrayal of a life characterized by peaceful environments and alluring manifestations of nature's magnificence. A girl who is "*disgusted by the false shows and boastful claims, the fever and fret of life*" "finds peace and joys in the sanctuary of Nature" (Kumar 96), according to the poem. She tells her mom this while seeming completely absorbed in the fanciful world of nature and fairies:

My beloved mama! Where I am headed is to a remote woodland.
To which the champa buds are responding by exhaling
Where lotus flowers shimmer, on the banks of the river
where koel are pursued
Listen closely; I am being beckoned by the faeries!
According to Singh (49),

The enchantment of nature surpasses the glittering embellishments of a worldly life for a female child. Imaginary fairy kingdoms embedded inside forests and natural settings are much more charming than our own reality. Natural sounds, particularly "the forest notes where forest streams are falling," provide her more joy than cradle or bridle music.

Conclusion

To sum up, ecocriticism is still growing and is widely regarded as a significant subfield of literary criticism, particularly in relation to American literature. This study presents the results of an ecological and ecocritical analysis of the works of a number of well-known writers and poets from the contemporary era. From the modern to the postmodern (after 1900) period of English literature, there was a noticeable change in focus from nature-human connection and nature-culture contrast to environmental

crisis awareness and advocacy. Using poetry, nature writing, and wilderness storytelling to address environmental issues is the biggest challenge facing ecocriticism today.

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