Chapter-1

Introduction:

Ecological Dynamism: An Interplay between Literature and Ecology

THE SAME stream of life that runs through my veins night and day runs through the world and dances in rhythmic measures.

It is the same life that shoots in joy through the dust of the earth in numberless blades of grass and breaks into tumultuous waves of leaves and flowers.

It is the same life that is rocked in the ocean-cradle of birth and of death, in ebb and in flow.

I feel my limbs are made glorious by the touch of this world of life. And my pride is from the life-throb of ages dancing in my blood this moment.

– Rabindranath Tagore (Gitanjali Verse 69)

This verse, taken from Rabindranath Tagore’s Gitanjali (1912) suggests the dynamism inherent in all the aspects of Nature. A human being is an inherent part of Nature, a fact he has forgotten in his ambitious pursuit of material goals. These lines seem to identify the vastness of Nature that excite human emotions. The perennial Nature is a source of energies and life-force for whole humanity on the Earth. The greatness and diversity of Nature has always lured the human world inviting theft, loot, and exploitation of the rich ecological biodiversity. Several dimensions related to the ecological history and its literary manifestation have been explored with critical acumen and incision.

With the advent of human life on the earth, the natural world has become a resource and an asset. Many a time, it has been reduced to generate capital and profit for humans. Millions of years ago
(around the Paleolithic age) when early humans descended on earth it heralded the first ever civilization of hunters and gatherers also called nomads. All societies or civilizations formed in the past were driven either by necessity or a desire for change. The hunter-gatherers were mostly nomadic and used to live in smaller groups. These traditional communities which usually depend on hunting, gathering, fishing and wandering from one place to another, were more close to nature as they engaged themselves with nature worship rituals. Nevertheless, the desire to settle down at one place gave way to agrarian societies. According to Gunnar Rundgren:

. . . traditional communities who survived on gathering, hunting and fishing remained relatively stable. A new phase began with agriculture. Human beings changed the ecosystems to a much wider extent than ever; it also led to changes in social organization with the introduction of rulers and subordinates (slaves, serfs or tenants). (1)

With the change in the societal structure, a drastic change came about in the means of exploitation and looting of the natural resources. The hand-made tools and materials gave way to machines and new techniques of material production that increased the production and consumption of synthetic or artificial products manufactured by polluting industries. Earlier, people led a simple and self-sufficient life, ate moderately and had a few needs. But in the present times, due to class divisions in the societal structure, the upper strata has acquired greater wealth and large estates to support themselves leaving only an interstice for Nature to thrive in a minuscule space. The people at the lower strata live a deprived life with no inheritance and comparably an unhealthy life, fretting with diseases and anxieties having no substantial means to survive in an oppressing environment. Nevertheless, any society is open to changes or fluxes and for bringing a sustainable ecological change in the society, the only thing that the humans need is to take appropriate
steps in this direction. The attitudes and actions of humans can bring a dynamic change in the whole order of social and ecological existence.

Dynamism is imminent not only in Nature but is also reflected within the thoughts and practices of its worshippers, gardeners, painters, artists, philosophers, eco-literates, and so on. In certain theories and philosophical thoughts, there always remains a dichotomy between two contradictory points of view; no single theory points towards one definite answer to the skeptical minds, rather its adherents create more confusion by showing inconsistency in their thoughts and views. The critics must adapt themselves to the changes as the new ideas or new generations come up in the social circles. A dynamic change manifests itself in the ecological theories as well as in the practices of eco-literates. Dynamism interlinks not one or two but multifarious aspects of the material Nature seen as an integral part of ecology as a whole. Julian Huxley, in his preface to Rachel Carson’s most distinguished book *Silent Spring* (1962), writes:

> The ecological approach... involves aiming at a dynamic balance, an integrated pattern of adjustment between a number of competing factors or even apparently conflicting interests. Ecology in the service of man cannot be merely quantitative or arithmetical: it has to deal with total situations and must think in terms of quality as well as quantity. One conflict is between the present and the future, between immediate and partial interests and the continuing interests of the entire human species. Accordingly, ecology must aim not only at optimum use but also at optimum conservation of resources. (Carson 19)

The intent behind the writing of this thesis is to present a broad analysis of environmental perception and the ways in which ecology finds a place in the current literary thought and artifacts. It intends to
assess the impact of literary scholarship and humanistic thought in cogitating an eco-centric way of being and how it provides a way for a more comprehensive understanding of enigmatic existence of humans on the Earth. It is a kind of an environmental research that evaluates the works modeled on ethical codes of conduct which enforce the human community to rethink over their vain yearnings, their responsibility towards the ecological world and reformulate their ideology to open up pathways for ecological sustainability.

Through this thesis, the impressions of the natural world upon the human society have been captured deeply and kaleidoscopically. All the nature-writings and nature novels taken up in the thesis for study have been analyzed from the perspectives of deep ecology and ecocriticism. The works from two different genres have been taken up here for study: a) **Nature-writings** like Thoreau’s *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (1854), Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962), Khushwant Singh’s *Nature Watch: A Diary* (1990), and Starhawk’s *The Earth Path: Grounding your Spirits in the Rhythms of Nature* (2004), and b) **Nature novels** like George Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), Khushwant Singh’s *I Shall not Hear the Nightingale* (1959), Starhawk’s *The Fifth Sacred Thing* (1993), and Ernest Callenbach’s *Ecotopia: A Novel* (1975). All these eco-oriented works deal with some of the significant environmental issues discussed below.

The environment plays a vital role in the life of all living organisms. It has been a major resource of life-giving forces such as air, water, Earth, and vegetation as well as other living organisms that help in the sustenance of life on this Earth. The loss or degradation of any of these forces might lead to ecological imbalance causing harm to the vitality and integrity of the whole environment. This happens due to the destructive activities of human beings such as excessive utilization of the Earthly resources, misuse of Nature and natural objects for material gain, installation of various chemical and other manufacturing factories serving the purposes of industrialization and
capitalism, and ill-devised projects of urbanization etc. These factors have led to serious environmental problems such as global warming. Through the decades, the human being, a social animal and a part of this entire natural world has been instrumental in the process of mutilating Nature by cutting trees and several acres of forests for agriculture, for building houses and roads. The prairies, savannas, and forests that are a major source of food for herbivores (or herbivorous animals such as cattle, sheep, goats etc.) have been pillaged by humans for their personal and material gains. In ancient ages, there existed a holistic relationship between Nature and all forms of life including humans because the ancestors used to worship Nature and were blessed with a huge biodiversity of flora and fauna. Besides, they had lesser needs as compared to the resources available for their utilization which were so abundant as to make them contented and satiated. However, in the present age, ironically there is a greater difference in the demand and supply of the natural resources due to a large scale increase in the consumer needs. In this age of population explosion and a severe increase in pollution, it has become so difficult to survive as one is unable to cope up with this ‘modern’ environment that has lost all contact with the natural world. Also, there has been an increase in demands for basic amenities such as food, shelter and clothing, clean and pure water, fresh air and a healthy environment. The urge for technological and market products is not possible to be fulfilled with such a diminishing stock and scanty supply of resources. Therefore, it has become necessary to evaluate the ever-increasing demands of human beings by putting them against the present availability of adequate stock and supply of required resources which depends on the reproductive capacity of the Earth. This measure of the human demand on Earth’s ecosystems is termed as the ecological footprint.

In order to define the connect between literature and ecology, it is essential to delve upon the related scientific concepts. The “ecological footprint”, one of the significant aspects of
environmental science, can be defined as a standardized measure of human demand for natural resources which is contrasted with the ecological ability of the Earth to regenerate and reinvigorate itself. It shows how much amount of biologically productive land and sea area is required for the essential supply of the natural resources for the adequate human consumption and for the assimilation of the waste. Through this assessment, it can be estimated how much of the Earth (or how many planet Earths) would be needed to support humanity if everybody follows a given lifestyle. In 2013, humanity’s total ecological footprint is predicted at 1.6 planet Earths. The human beings consumed ecological resources at a very accelerated pace that is 1.6 times as quickly as Earth can renew them. It will take one year and six months for the earth to regenerate ecological resources consumed and wasted by humanity on a global scale (Global Footprint Network).

The “ecological footprint” is the effect of an individual or a group on the earth, communicated as the measure of land required to maintain their utilization of common assets and resources of natural capital. It is a standard markup depicting the ways and actions of the human beings that deeply affect the quality and potential of the Earth to withstand the increasing levels of pollution and exploding population growth. The current statistical data shows that the world population has reached around 6 billion and the rate of waste production has reached even higher than the goods manufactured or food produced. Humans produce three times more waste than the current rate of production of consumer goods. This has led to even a more serious environmental crisis of global warming as evident from the present data about the reduction of the water level in water-bodies of the planet and drying up of rivers as well as melting of ice and glaciers in colder regions. The whole world today stands at a critical juncture of its befallen doom. At such a moment the poets and the artists have become more concerned about their environment and have
taken an altogether different stance of examining the surrounding world through aesthetics and imagination.

Literature has become a useful medium for highlighting some of the critical issues related to the human society and also generating consciousness about them. Since the ancient days, the affinity between humans and non-humans has found an animated existence in the great works of our ancestors such as Vedas, Upanishads, Quran, Gospels and the Book of Genesis. They instill the moral and environmentally conscious way of life in human beings. The ancient Indian scriptures Vedas and Upanishads, written in classical Sanskrit, are ancestral holy texts that talk about nature conservation and pay deep reverence to Nature. In the early Christian era, the holy texts like Gospels and Book of Genesis revere the God’s creation of life on earth. The Islamic texts too, such as the holy book Quran, manifest the divine in the natural world. The classical ancestors inspired by the holy words of God pay their gratitude and tribute to certain elements of Nature that enrich the entire earth. They revere the sacredness and dynamism of ecological existence. These ancestral books of ecological wisdom have kindled the imagination of subsequent literary writers and have provided new dimensions to the current literary scholarship. The feature of dynamism is evident not only in ecological thought but has become an aspect of literary studies too that consider the relation between humanities and environmental science.

The idea of dynamism—the symbiotic interdependence of different organisms in order to make life sustainable and harmonious—has been consistently reiterated by literary writers and thinkers. In fact, the term ‘dynamism’ in itself means any of the several philosophical systems or theories that seek to explain the phenomenal processes of Nature by the action of some immanent force. Dynamism forms the core aspect of ecology where it reflects an unstable variability of the biosphere, a home for the diverse forms of biotic
and abiotic components that tend to subsist and survive in a mutually beneficial environment. ‘Ecological dynamism’ stands for the dynamic relationships that exist between the natural organisms and their immediate surroundings. The dynamism in ecology exhibits itself in the workings of Nature as well as in the natural interactions that prevail amidst all the micro-and macro-organisms of Nature in their symbiotic connect for food and survival. Nature goes through an evolutionary cycle of constant convulsions and fluxes that make it more dynamic in character. In Nature, it relates to those singular qualities of the ecosystem along with its inbuilt mechanism of biological processes that make it self-sustaining, self-regulating and capable of evading alien forces.

In the field of critical studies, the philosophy of dynamism can be equally linked to the principles of radical ecology – a theory that relies on bringing about a revolutionary change in the social, economic and political circumstances as well as in the scientific and technological developments in the pursuit of ecological sustainability. In the study of ecological criticism, different views and approaches of writers and critics have foregrounded the recent studies on the relationship between human beings and their environment. Some pertinent areas of study are shallow and deep ecology, social ecology, eco-Marxism, eco-terrorism, spiritual ecology/eco-spirituality, etc. Shallow ecology treats Nature as one that has some usefulness for the humankind in the long run. This form of ecology treats Nature in utilitarian terms. There are shades of shallow ecology which can be traced in Starhawk’s *The Fifth Sacred Thing* described later in the thesis. On the other hand, Deep Ecology considers the intrinsic value of all forms of Nature including human beings as an inextricable part of Nature. The phrase ‘deep ecology’ is coined by Arne Naess, a Norwegian philosopher, who ranks Nature above humankind. He introduced the term ‘deep ecology’ in his 1973 article “The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement” in which he claims that the deep ecology movement commenced from the work of
scientists especially by biologists or ecologists who were devoutly engaged in their field studies of the wildlife, biodiversity and ecosystems. Deep ecology considers that Nature has its own intrinsic worth regardless of any utilitarian value. In deep ecology, the humans and Nature are seen not as separate entities but as one indivisible whole. The entire human race is part and parcel of Nature. All meaning is contained within the system of the whole Universe. Deep ecology tends to borrow this idea of deconstructionist movement implying a deep reverence for the world of Nature. It puts Nature above culture and society denying utilitarian employment of natural resources or any human intrusion into the sanctity of the ecological sphere. The concept of deep ecology is pervasive in all the literary works. However, in Thoreau’s *Walden* and Starhawk’s *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, there is greater elaboration of this concept. Social ecology investigates the interconnections between the society and the ecological world – how a society shapes its environment or vice versa. It examines Nature from the perspective of its influences upon certain areas of society such as politics, religion, geography, civics, science and psychology and how these discourses affect the workings of Nature. It advocates the annihilation of the capitalist models of society and its oppressive modes of production, supporting the socialist ideals such as common ownership, equal distribution of wealth and property, eliminating class distinctions and the restoration of the commons. The concept of social ecology has been gainfully used by George Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss*, Starhawk’s *The Fifth Sacred Thing* and Ernest Callenbach’s *Ecotopia* that have been analyzed later in the thesis. Another view is based on the Marxist ideals termed as Eco-Marxism. It is an anthropocentric view that criticizes western capitalism and its oppressive beliefs such as class-based distinctions, unequal wealth distribution, low wages and oppressive working conditions for the proletariat class, destruction of the commons and the natural world, and increasing industrialism that degrades Nature. This concept relies on the ideals of Karl Marx for the development of a healthy society. These are the ideals that form
the foundation for a perfect society as exhibited in the works like Plato’s *Republic* (c. 380 BC), Thomas More’s *Utopia* (1516), and Ernest Callenbach’s *Ecotopia* (1975). Another concept is known as Eco-terrorism that means any act of violence or mutilation committed upon the agents of Nature like flora, fauna or some other natural object either by a group of extremists for political reasons or by criminal minded persons such as hunters and smugglers. The element of eco-terrorism is evident in Khushwant Singh’s *I Shall not Hear the Nightingale* that has been discussed later.

**Need for the Deep Ecological Thought:**

The present study seeks to explore the dimensions of the ecological study in the evocation of the richness and inherent interconnectedness of the diverse life forms. The research tends to bring into focus the dialectics of the binary oppositions in Western constructs as well as a deconstructive strategy which is a necessary element in the destabilizing of the anthropomorphic view of the world. The study of the ecological thought underlying certain theories such as deep ecology, radical ecology, social ecology, and so on, has paved the way for a more systematic understanding of the terms – ‘Nature’ and ‘ecology’, as well as of ideas like “everything is connected to everything else” and that “everything must go somewhere” (Barry Commoner, qtd. in Butler). Ecology interconnects all the biotic and abiotic components of the ecosystem, the larger whole, of which they form an intrinsic part. Nature with all its purity, harmony and interconnectivity is a major focus of study in ecology, an idea supported by all literary works taken up for consideration in the present thesis.

The ecological thinking is a wider and broader perception of our traditional ontological view of Nature and environment. In certain philosophies concerning Nature and its relation with humanity, both Nature and humans are seen as separate entities propagating a complete demarcation between the natural and the human world. The
theory of Deep Ecology maintains a similar kind of view where it demands no human intrusion into the world of Nature. However deep ecology does not consider humans as separate from Nature but its theorists sometimes resort to their utmost hatred towards the anthropocentric attitudes of humanity in their deep reverence for the pristine Nature. They demand that humanity must keep off the grass for the preservation of the sanctity and purity of Nature. Likewise, Nature theories propagated in the West also demonstrate the dichotomy between mind and body, humans and Nature, subject and object, and the self and the soul, privileging the entity of the first character over the second one.

In formulating ecocritical concepts, the contribution of Timothy Morton, the well-known British ecocritic, has been enormous. The ecological thought, as per Timothy Morton, rejects the idea of Nature seen as an object that lies ‘over there’, as an entity ‘ought’ not to be intruded upon, and a thing that had existed in all its diversity and purity in the past but not ‘now’, not ‘here’. Actually it conceives the concept of Nature as something replaced by a much wider and broader concept, that is, ‘Ecology’ that constitutes an inherent interconnectedness of the organisms varying from single-celled to the multi-cellular organisms, such as from bacterium or algae to the bigger animals such as giant oaks, banyans, elephants, humans or whales. Another salient concept of Morton is “eco-mimesis” defined in his *Ecology Without Nature* (2007) as the manifestation of the outer world in the literary works of art. This particular concept of “eco-mimesis” also relates to the concept of Berry Lopez’s “outer-mimesis” (Buell, *Environmental Imagination* 94) and Lawrence Buell’s concepts of “place-connectedness” and “toxic discourse”. The idea of toxic discourse has been introduced by Buell in his book *Writing for the Endangered World* (2001). In an excerpt from this book, Lawrence Buell defines his concept of toxic discourse as “anxiety arising from perceived threat of environmental hazard due to chemical modification by human agency” (Buell, *EW* 30-31). These
ideas that signify an imitative representation of the outer world are derived from Ancient Greek ideology of “mimesis” as propagated by the Greek philosophers, Plato and his disciple Aristotle. However, these two philosophers slightly differ in their theory of imitation. Plato believed imitation to be thrice removed from reality and considered art as illusory as it is not real but merely an imitation of the real. Plato favours ideas over illusion and philosophy over art or poetics. Aristotle, however, too considered art as an imitative representation of the real but unlike Plato, he preferred art to philosophy. Aristotle believed that all literature is imitative in Nature as it copies. Life is nothing without the existence of Nature. It is Nature that makes the life of human beings possible on this Earth. So, in literature, writers portray an exact reproduction of life and Nature. Nature forms the background for human action in literature, as Aristotle conveys in Poetics (335 BCE).

All these ideas when expressed in literary frameworks lead on to a definitive field known as ecocriticism. A study of these environmental concepts and their relation with the ecosphere or the biosphere can well be termed as ecology. When these same concepts are applied to the works of art and literature, it comes to be regarded as Eco-criticism (as it is called in the USA) or Green Studies (as it is called in Britain or UK). Eco-criticism is a field of literary study that has emerged during the 1970s in American studies and has brought up a new approach towards literature in terms of its Nature-representations and Nature-consciousness. It is a study of inter-relationship of literature, Nature, and ecology that tends to evaluate the significance and impressions of ecological representations through an environmental perspective. The term ‘eco-criticism’ came into existence from its first use by William Rueckert in his essay “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Eco-criticism” (1978) where he defines it as “the application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature, because ecology (as a science, as a discipline and as the basis for a human vision) has the greatest
relevance for the present and the future of the world we all live in” (Glotfelty and Fromm 107). But it is Cheryl Glotfelty who brought eco-criticism in practice. Cheryl Glotfelty co-founded the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) that caused a burgeoning rise of American ecocriticism in academic movement during the 1990s. This association organized various conferences and lectures on the burning issues of environment represented in certain literary texts. Besides these two, there are other pioneers of this new critical theory such as Harold Fromm, Lawrence Buell, Michael P. Cohen, etc. This American offshoot is influenced by the works of American Transcendentalists like Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882), Margaret Fuller (1810-1850) and Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862). On the other hand, the British version of eco-criticism, i.e., Green Studies takes its literary stance from British Romanticism and its creative writers like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats and Shelley and its pioneers are Jonathan Bate, Lawrence Coupe, Richard Kerridge and Greg Garrard. In India too, there is to be found a distinct variety of eco-criticism where Nature is carved into the spiritual framework of Hindu religion. The Hindu religious texts (like the Bhagvad Gita, the Vedas and the Upanishads, Sri Guru Granth Sahib) present a holistic vision of Nature and environment seen in an inherent interconnectedness with the essence of the man and the world. The Indian writers like Kalidas, Rabindranath Tagore, Toru Dutt, and Sarojini Naidu had a very indulgent attitude towards the world of Nature with eco-spiritual undertones.

**Eco-Spirituality**

Spirituality is an inherent feature of Nature that persists in the human ideology since the early periods of the human evolution. From then on, spirituality has had on human thought as well as in the study of Nature. It has bestowed a different outlook on Nature viewing it in constant and unequivocal interrelatedness with the world of Nature. Nature is observed as an incarnate of the Universal Spiritual Being
that co-exists with the physical and bodily existence of the Earthly life-forms. However, this is a matter of great irony that with times humans have got so engrossed in their material pursuits themselves that they have dissected and dissociated themselves from Nature. They have become completely isolated and alienated beings, lost in the debris of their ‘Satanic’ ambitions to subdue Nature, suffocating and diminishing it under their devilish hunger for materialism and vested interests with the added problem of ‘swarming’ population. In such circumstances, there is a great need for a spiritual awakening of the ecological consciousness of the entire humanity. In this world driven by consumerism, the rate of consumption is higher than the rate of production be it agricultural farm produce or industrial commodities. The wholesale production and manufacture of goods have given way to socio-economical ills like poverty, unemployment, corruption, adulteration, and manufacture of low-quality foods. With the commencement of the new age of spirituality called New Age from 1970’s, the humans have more rigorously felt the absence of the spiritual element in everyday living. They have begun to calculate the range and the magnitude of its destructive actions that have triggered the degradation of the natural environment and intense climatic disorders. It has resulted in the quick fix of immediate solutions for an upcoming apocalyptic danger. One of the solutions was to adopt the practices of spiritual worship as a shield against the squalor and the diseased mentality of the technological world of the twenty first century. A gradual change has occurred in the mentality of the people for they have just begun to realize the importance of leading an ethically and spiritually sound life in the wake of ecological consciousness and thinking.

Eco-spirituality has been an inherent part of many primeval faiths. There are many forms of worship symbolizing the sanctity of Nature. The Earth-centered religion is one of those systems of religious beliefs that are based upon the deep reverence of Nature and the life-processes. It includes all those religions and practices
that worship the Mother Earth, Nature, and the gods and goddesses of fertility and reproduction, such as the various forms of goddess worship or matriarchal religions e.g., Shaktism, a major tradition in Hindu religion, associated with the goddesses Shakti, Lakshmi, Durga and Kali; Terra Mater, an earth goddess in ancient Roman religion; Pachamama is revered as the earth mother in indigenous culture of Andes; whereas ‘Gaia’ is the Greek goddess of earth. Earth religions are structured according to certain principles of preservation of ecological world that call for the utilization of these principles for the welfare of society and Nature. In the Eastern spiritual tradition, there are certain religious trends that worship all the ecological life-forms as per their own norms and rules of conduct. Certain religions like Hinduism, Taoism, Sikhism, Buddhism, and so on believe in the omnipresence of the Supreme God, an underlying Spirit of all Nature. Pantheism can also be counted as the Earth based spirituality. The pantheistic belief is founded by Baruch Spinoza. It is the belief that all reality is associated with divinity, where everything encompasses all-pervasive and immanent God. In the Western tradition, pantheism had been formulated as a different religious philosophy and logic established on the work by the seventeenth century rationalist, Benedict Spinoza (or Baruch Spinoza). His book *Ethics* (1677) has been composed because of Descartes’ popular dualist hypothesis that sees mind and body as distinct elements. The term ‘pantheism’ was authored after Spinoza’s death. But he is regarded as the most celebrated advocate of “Pantheism”.

In early historic period, people had seemed to be more connected with the Earth and its systems as they used to observe their rituals and spiritual practices quite sincerely and devotedly and that too with pure and innocent hearts. All the elements of Nature and particular gods and goddesses related to those elemental beings were worshipped. People lived in small tribes then and had a deep connection with the ecological world involving themselves religiously in the ceremonies of worshipping the ‘sacred Earth’ and its symbolic
Archana

The tribal people were very close to their environment and knew the dynamic workings of Nature that interweave the organisms into one unified whole. “This idea”, according to Paul Gunn Allen “is apparent in the Plains tribes’ idea of a medicine wheel or sacred hoop. The concept is one of singular unity that is dynamic and encompassing, including all that is contained in its most essential aspect, that of life” (Glotfelty and Fromm 243).

Tribal people believe in the animated energies of all life, accepting the variations in Nature but also adapting themselves according to those changes. They believe in the continuous functioning of the natural life forms. There is stasis though and that’s only in their conviction that all mechanisms of Nature are attached to all other mechanisms in the whole system of the universe. The tribal Indians are conscientiously aware of this idea that all life is animated and living that partakes in the workings of the Immanent Being and contributes in the continuous existence of that great Mysterious Soul. The people belonging to these tribes firmly acknowledge the essential harmony of all the things of Nature as entities of equal stature in the scheme of things, refuting the ideas of alienation, opposition, and dualism that are the characteristic features of the Western thought. The tribal people prioritize Nature over humans. They visualize an authentic one-to-one relationship between the living and the non-living entities, between organic and inorganic world. The tribal people glorify Nature and its animated existence which can be termed as animism. Animism is a religious belief in the spiritual existence of all creatures and objects. It is an ancient belief that perceives all the things and elements of Nature as animated and alive which is still practised in certain traditional societies. This belief assigns spirituality and human attributes to non-humans and inanimate objects. Animism is one of the main aspects of certain religious beliefs in diverse cultures such as Hinduism, Taoism and Wiccan religion. It precedes Paganism and forms a complex set of ecological ethics. Paganism refers to the pre-Christian religions or faiths that
belong to certain ancient cultures such as, Greece, Rome, China, India, Egypt and so on. In Paganism, various religious groups concentrate on specific traditions, practices or elements such as mythology, ecology, witchcraft, Celtic traditions or certain gods or goddesses. There are certain forms of Paganism that derive out of traditional religious beliefs of indigenous cultures such as shamanism, and Hellenism.

**Ecospiritual Reflections:**

**Hinduism** is one of the foremost religions where people worship several gods and goddesses. The precepts of Hinduism are to be found in different religious texts such as Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas, Upapuranas, *Srimad Bhagavad Gita* and in certain other works of ancient writers. There are four Vedas: *Rigveda*, *Atharvaveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Samaveda* (which date back to the Vedic era around 11th century BCE), 108 Upanishads, 18 Puranas and 18 Upapuranas. Such a wide variety of scriptural texts propound specific theories relating to all fields of discursive formulations such as scientific, mathematical and environmental, geographical, socio-economic, political and so on. *Rigveda* is an ancient text that is a collection of Vedic Sanskrit hymns to gods and goddesses symbolizing elements of Nature such as Agni (fire), Jal (water), Vayu (Air), Brahma (universe), Indra (god of clouds and rain), and so on. There are 1,028 hymns and 10,600 verses compiled in ten books of *Rigveda* called Mandalas. Out of these books, eight books discuss about cosmology and venerate deities. The other two books, Book I and X, added later to the collection, deal with the philosophical questions related to the origin and creation of the universe. The second Veda, *Yajurveda* composed around the same time as *Rigveda* is a scripture of sacrificial ceremonies, religious reverence and formulas or mantras for the worship and appeasement of certain deities. There are two broad classifications of *Yajurveda*, divided into Shukla Yajurveda (or the White Yajurveda) and Krishna Yajurveda (or the
Black Yajurveda). While Shukla Yajurveda is a collection of clear, lucid and well-arranged verses, Krishna Yajurveda is a motley of unclear, incoherent, and ill-arranged verses of chanting mantras. The third Veda, Samaveda is a liturgical text of melodies, songs and chants. There are 1,875 verses in the text that specifically derive out of the verses from the Rigveda being set to a musical composition. Atharvaveda is a veda or a storehouse of knowledge about the rules and measures of everyday life. It contains around 6000 mantras in 730 hymns collated in 20 books with two books added later to the collection. The Samhita portion of the Atharvaveda dwells on the 2nd millennium BCE magico-religious rites to resolve the superstitious miseries.

In Bhagavad Gita, a 700 verse Hindu scripture (a part of the Sanskrit epic Mahabharata written by sage Ved Vyasa), Lord Sri Krishna, the Avatar of Lord Vishnu, enlightens the soul of his devotee, Arjuna through His holy words of wisdom and thought. It is regarded as the holy scripture of Hindus that contains the erudite truth of political and philosophical knowledge and guides the path of mortals through this ‘wide, wide sea’ of life and paves the way for a healthy spiritual life ahead. However, the ‘Sankhya philosophy’ of Maharshi Kapila, the ideas of which are also found in Bhagavad Gita, does not believe in the presence of God, rather it accredits ‘Prakriti’ or the Nature to be the ‘Sole Creator of the Universe’ and the ‘Ultimate Cause’ that led to the evolution of life and the organisms on the planet Earth. It is an atheistic school of thought in Hinduism that regards ‘Prakriti’ or Nature as the ‘Primary Soul’ that emanates life on the Earth. Actually, it has been derived out of the theories given by Maharshi Kapila who had defined the cosmic existence as an admixture of two elements i.e. ‘Purusha’ (the Ultimate Soul or the Brahman) and ‘Prakriti’ (the Absolute Self or the Maya). According to Sankhya philosophy:
Prakriti or Nature is responsible for all manifestation and diversity, while the individual souls, which are eternal, remain passive. When they come into contact with Nature, they become subject to its influence and become embodied by its realities. Prakriti is an eternal reality and the first cause of the universe. In its pure original form, it is the unmanifest (avyaktam), primal resource, the sum of the universal energy. It is without cause, but acts as the cause and source of all effects, and “the ultimate basis of the empirical universe”. (Jayaram V.)

The Sankhya philosophy talks of the cosmic energies that play an important role by encapsulating all other organic life into its sacred cyclical pattern through the reciprocated interactions among animate and inanimate objects in the bind of that Ultimate Source of Life that is Prakriti. It is the Ishwariya Shakti, ‘Prakriti’ (the Mother Nature) impregnated with the seed of ‘Purusha’ (the Universal Cosmic Male) that is the primal/root cause of the creationary and evolutionary processes. The result is the Genesis of the Cosmos. Both these cosmic forms become the part of the Greater Whole or the Super Soul called ‘Brahman’. While ‘Prakriti’ is the matter (the material Nature), ‘Purusha’ is the Spirit (the Divine Soul). Without Purusha, Prakriti has no existence. In a similar vein, Purusha (spirit or mind) achieves significance when it merges into Prakriti (matter or body). Purusha coalesced into Prakriti becomes the essence of all creations. The unison between the spirit and the matter or mind and body forms the core of the monistic belief of Hinduism.

Like Hinduism, Sikhism also originated in India but unlike it, rejected idol-worship and believed in only One God whose all-pervasive, residing in every being. Sikhism as a form of a religious practice was introduced by Guru Nanak Dev Ji through his preaching of its tenets. However, at that time, people used to worship a large number of gods and goddesses that were known to Hinduism. That
gave birth to certain superstitious beliefs and practices encouraged by the Brahmin priests in order to make money and profit out of it which was not propagated by the Hindu religion. It is the Brahmin priests who began to cheat upon innocent human minds through their callousness for their own material benefit. Thus “it was to exterminate these practices and to counteract these evil influences that Guru Nanak emphasized strict monotheism in his teachings” (“Guru Granth Sahib”). For the same reason, he composed the ‘Mool Mantra’ for the enlightenment of the souls. He preached the following teaching to his followers:

There is one God  
His Name is Truth  
The All-pervading Creator,  
Without fear, without hatred  
Immortal, unborn, self-existent,  
By grace, the Enlightener.  
True in the beginning, true throughout the ages,  
True even now, Nanak, and forever shall be true. (“Guru Granth Sahib”)

Sikhism differs from other religions in the sense that it strictly follows certain rituals and laws that were regarded to be a way to attain the spirit of oneness with God. He, who is present through all things and pervades the spirit of all ecological beings, is the singular Sublime aspect whom a Sikh worships with deep reverence and views all the people belonging to different creed or religion to be equal and one in the eyes of God. It does not differentiate between religions or individuals of different castes, class, creed, sex, or race.

**Wiccan Spirituality** or the Goddess religion associated with the worship of goddess Diana, comes under the category of neo-pagan religions seems to emerge from the philosophy of Hinduism, as it also believes in the oneness of all beings. It is an Earth-based spirituality that follows a sacred pattern of meditative practices and magical
rituals that connect the souls of human worshippers with the powers of the ecological world. It aims to relieve the souls from all entanglements of the worldly life creating a stress-free environment around them through spiritual practices and rhythmic movements or dancing around the circular patterns. Like all the monistic religions, Wiccan spirituality also believes in the interconnected unity of all life forms and coherent oneness of mind and body, spirit and matter. This kind of spirituality has emerged out of the pantheistic belief of the Romantic era that proclaims the inherent intertheisticness of all life-forms on both the physical and the spiritual levels. Starhawk is one of the devout practitioners of Wiccan spirituality. She has also authored some related books like *The Spiral Dance: A Rebirth of the Ancient Religions of the Great Goddess* (2011) and *The Earth Path: Grounding Your Spirits in the Rhythms of Nature* (2005).

**Romanticism and Ecology:**

The English critic, Jonathan Bate brings out a correlation between Romanticism and ecology. Ecocriticism seems to have evolved out of the theory of Romanticism which contains the fundamental tenets and principles of ecological criticism. The Romantic theory includes love for Nature, rural setting and personal responses towards natural surroundings, incorporating the philosophy of Wordsworth about Nature. His interest in the serene natural environment, common village folk, agrarian background and the Romantic spirit has multiple interpretations such as Wordsworth’s idea of “emotion recollected in tranquility” from his *Preface to the Lyrical Ballads* (1800), Samuel Taylor Coleridge’s supernaturalism and his philosophy of “willing suspension of disbelief” from his *Biographia Literaria* (1817), Percy Bysshe Shelley’s enthusiasm and revolutionary zeal, Keats’s “negative capability” and sensuous apprehension of Nature. The traces of ecological theory can be found to have sprouted from Romanticism.
The theory of Eco-criticism or Green Studies aims to analyze different forms of literary representations in order to trace and discover the tropes of Nature imagery and their metaphorical implications and the impressions they create on the readers. Just as Nature has various shapes and shades, similarly there are multiple ways of dealing with Nature and its multifarious aspects which are taken into consideration by different authors according to their respective interests. There are some writers who express their personal views about Nature through philosophical manifestations of the natural world as contrasted with the world of humans. The works that depict the spiritual, ethical and philosophical notions of Nature are termed as Nature-writings. Some authors present a realistic portrayal of an imagined world of Nature that is shown to be influencing the society and its inhabitants. Such works that represent this connection of Nature with the cultural world along with other environmental issues are called Nature novels.

**Representations of Nature in Indian Literature:**

The literary representation of Nature, however, is not limited only to these two fields of writings nature-writings and nature novels but extends to other areas of literary writings such as verse, epic, and dramas. In India, Nature valorization as a concept has evolved from its idyllic display in the Vedas, Aranayakas, Upanishads and long narrative verses carved in the literary framework of epics that occupy a place in Indian literary corpus. They were written in the Vedic era that dated around 1500 c. BCE to 600 c. BCE. The Vedic people used to venerate Nature through certain spiritual practices like – *yajna*, chanting (*mantras japa*) and meditations (*dhyana*). They considered Nature to be a manifestation of the divine that pervades in the heart of all creatures. There are four Vedas, also called Samhitas or collection of verses, *Rigveda, Samaveda, Yajurveda*, and *Atharvaveda* that not only idolize Nature but also provide an altruistic vision of ecological harmony and compassion. The Aranayakas are the
foundational books on Hindu theology and the source of indigenous ecological knowledge, of which *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* considered as the Great Forest text, is one of the most significant books on ecological diversity and forestry traditions. The Vedic literature is a doctrine of ecological wisdom that acquaints the humans of India’s rich ecological heritage and environment management. In the *Mundaka Upanishad*, Nature is revered thus:

Vanaspatim van asthapayadhvam,

Nisudadidhvam akhanant utsam | (qtd. in Shepard 115)

This hymn further preaches that it is in the interest of mankind to plant more and more plants and trees as they can help in safeguarding the water resources.

The ecological wisdom contained in the Vedas can be discussed “mathematically or chemically, or it can be danced and told as a myth” (Shepard 115). The humans have always treated Nature as a vital resource for their own sustained well-being. They are the only rational creatures on Earth who can cherish and adore the opulence of the natural environment. An alternative pattern of social and ecological harmony with well-formulated dharmic injunctions for environmental protection that uphold a vision of all living beings in the universe as members of the Earth family (*vasudhaiva kutumbakam*), can be found in ancient Indian literature, polity, philosophy and cosmologies.

The ancient Vedic literature envisions a schema of piety and compassion for the Earth and its inhabitants. The Vedic philosophy believes in the sublime presence of an underlying order that regulates and controls all life in the whole cosmic existence known as ‘*rta*’. As per this Vedic vision, the humans are not the sole creation of this Earth rather they are yoked into the thread of ‘*rta*’ that binds them with the elements of Nature and the biosphere. The ‘*rta*’ helps in the maintenance of an ecological balance of the five primary elements of
Nature i.e. earth, fire, water, air, and ether. The different literary traditions in the ancient Sanskrit literature give prominence to the concepts of *rta*, *dharma* and *karma* where the individuals ingrained in these ethical principles are seen as steeped in the environmental wisdom.

The ancient books on polity, ethics, and literature depict an epistemic worldview that incorporates sublime and interrelated aspects of humanity’s relationship with the environment and the cosmic identities. Kautilya, a famous politician, and courtier, had written a significant treatise on polity and governance, *Arthashastra* that provides a critique of the competent measures taken by the state for the conservation and sustenance of the ecological communities. The book written around the period of 4th century BCE can be compared with Plato’s *Republic* (c. 380 BC). It describes an ideal society based on sound principles of good governance and environmental management. The book testifies several past instances of ancestry traditions and practices related to mining, agriculture, and forestry. *Arthashastra* intends to impose a ban on humanity’s destructive and pillaging acts and calls for severe punishments for ravaging the Earth and contaminating the entire country.

The ecological representations can also be found in certain pre-Independence writers like Kalidasa, Sri Aurobindo Ghose, Toru Dutt, Sarojini Naidu, Rabindranath Tagore, etc. and post-independence Indian writers and poets like A. K. Ramanujan, Gieve Patel, Anita Desai, Kamala Markandaya and Amitav Ghosh. However, the names are not limited to these few. Beginning from the writings of pre-independence era, the ecological works of utmost importance that come to one’s mind are ancient Indian scriptures like Vedas, Upanishads, *BhagvadaGita*, ancient epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*, and works of Kalidasa, Tulsidas and Kabir. Kalidasa, a classical Sanskrit writer, who is recognized as the greatest poet and dramatist in Indian literature, has written extensively on Indian
Archana 30

myths, folklores, and environmental perspective. His works have been translated into English and many other languages and read worldwide. He attained fame in Sanskrit Literature through his gemstone works like *Abhijnanashakuntalam*, *Malavikagnimitra*, and *Vikramorvashiyam* that come under the category of dramas whereas his poetical works include *Ritusamhara*, *Meghaduta* (elegiac poem), *Kumarasambhava*, and *Raghuvarsha*. The dates of these works are uncertain. His magnum opus *Abhijnana Shakuntalam*, regarded as his masterpiece, reflects his deep ecological awareness and love of Nature. The poetess Toru Dutt (1856-1877) through her creative writings and translations from French and Sanskrit literature had come into limelight during the early period of Indian literary history. Her works include translations from French like *A Sheaf Gleaned in French Fields* (1877), her individual English poems like “The Lotus”, “Our Casuarina Tree”, and “Baugmaree” reflect her love for the natural world. One of the most famous Indian writers and the poets of the pre-Independence era is Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941) who is a Nobel Laureate in the category of Indian English literature is best known for his collected verse *Gitanjali*. His prose writings like *The Message of the Forest* depict his deep reverence for Nature as he writes, “the hermitage shines out, in all our ancient literature, as the place where the chasm between man and the rest of creation has been bridged” (*The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore* 388). Sri Aurobindo Ghose (1872-1950) was one of the early Indian English writers and poets whose works suggest ecological consciousness and spiritual harmony of all beings. His masterpiece *Savitri: A Legend and A Symbol* (published in two parts in 1950 and 1951), is a modern epic written in English that is also considered to be a modern-day scripture. It covers various areas like the history of evolution, the creation of humans, and Nature, and of Universe, the existence of God, philosophy of life, mysticism, and occultism. Sarojini Naidu (1879-1949), most significantly considered as the Nature poet has written certain collections of verses like *The Golden Threshold* (1905), *The Bird of Time: Songs of Life, Death and the Spring* (1912),
and *The Broken Wing: Songs of Love, Death and Spring* (1917). These collections contain some of the finest pieces of Nature lyrics that seem to be inspired by the Romantic writers especially William Wordsworth. Then there are the writers from post-Independence era who too have made their contribution to the works of eco-critical merit such as A. K. Ramanujan, Jayanta Mahapatra, Arundhati Roy, Mahasweta Devi and so on. The main thrust of the poems of A.K. Ramanujan (1929-1993) is towards the exploration of the Indian self and identity as well as existential ideology through the figurative use of ecological metaphors. Some of his well-known titles are “Ecology”, “Extended Family”, “The Striders”, “Christmas”, “A Hindu to his Body”, etc. The images of Nature like tree, rivers, insects and reptiles abound in his poems that tend to justify his views about human beings’ existence made possible due to presence of Nature around him. Nature finds its representation in many other Indian writers too, the prominent among them being Jayanta Mahapatra who is born in 1928. He is very much charmed with the images of Nature such as rain and flowing water that rains in his poems like “Rain Sense”, “A Rain”, “A Rain of Rites”, “Four Rain Poems”, etc. and liking for water flows through the poems, “Games of the Sea”, “Song of the River”, and “On the Bank of the Ganges”, and so on. K. N. Daruwalla (born 1937) too has undoubtedly written some of the finest poems based on Nature such as “Death of a Bird”, “Crossing of Rivers”, “River-Silt”, and so on. The Indian novelist and dramatist, Mahashweta Devi (1926-2016) from West Bengal delves deep into eco-oriented issues with a devil-may-care attitude in her literary works and take an active participation in eco-centric activities. Mahashweta Devi, in her works like *Chotti Munda and his Arrow* (1980), *Hajar Churashir Maa* (1974), and *Aranyer Adhikar* (1976) offers a critique of the current civilization, the split between Nature and culture and the imminent threats posed by the forces of modernization. She penetrates deeply into the insights of ecological concerns as compared to the economic forces in a society. The novelist and activist, Arundhati Roy (b. 1961) has also reflected her
true love for Nature in her maiden novel, *The God of Small Things* (2001). She is both an artist and activist. She has also articulated the rights of Nature to exist freely and abundantly in her non-fictional work *The Algebra of Infinite Justice* (2001) which is a collection of essays. In one of her essays from the book, “The Greater Common Good”, she shows her deep concern for the dangers of big dam projects that can cause devastation for the humanity and can lead to large scale displacements of the masses from the homes. Arundhati Roy’s novel *The God of Small Things* (1997), in both its form and content, investigates the ecological interpenetration of both human and natural life that unveils the hidden ties between the diminutive and the mighty. Anne Maxwell argues that the authors like Mahasweta Devi and Arundhati Roy often value indigenous and native cultures “purely for what they can contribute to contemporary environmental debates and practices” (18).

**Nature in British Literature:**

In British Literature too, Nature occupies a special place in some of the art-forms, especially in literature and paintings. There are certain English writers who have exhibited different dimensions of Nature representations in their artistic writings. For example, in Elizabethan Age, the concept of Nature acquired much attention from the significant writers of this age like Edmund Spenser, Philip Sidney, and William Shakespeare. Edmund Spenser (1552-1599) was known for his scenic descriptions of Nature displayed with a great skilful handling of symbolism, allusions and allegory. His masterpiece narratives *The Faerie Queene* (1590), for example, he makes an elaborate use of allusions and allegorical references to the reign of Queen Elizabeth and her courtiers. Spenser’s first major poetic work *Shepheardes Calender* (1579), written in the imitation of Virgil’s *Eclogues* (42-39 BC), recounts the life of a shepherd through the twelve months of the year. The poet and critic Philip Sidney (1554-1586) too celebrates Nature in his works like a collection of
sonnets, *Astrophel and Stella* (1591), and a heroic romance in prose called *Arcadia* (1590). William Shakespeare (1564-1616) employs Nature as similes and metaphor in his sonnets and dramas comparing the handsome face of his patron (Earl of Southampton) with the beauty of the summer season.

In the Augustan Age of English Literature, Nature has been well expressed in the writings of Alexander Pope, William Blake, James Thompson, and Thomas Gray etc. Alexander Pope (1688-1744) has composed a few poems that are dedicated to the significance of the natural world for the humans e.g. “Windsor Forest” (1903), a topographical poem that not only describes the external Nature but also presents an allegory of political and social events of that age in the poem. Pope’s “Essay on Man: Epistle I” is an extended analysis of the natural world and the mechanism of the whole universe. According to Erin Drew and John Sitter, “An Essay on Man is more skeptical of anthropocentrism and more insistent on seeing Nature ‘whole’ than any major 19th century poem” (2). Pope sees a holistic relationship between man and Nature and acknowledging the idea of ‘The Great Chain of Being’, he assigns primary significance to Nature. He begins *An Essay on Man* (1733-34) with an epistle on Nature explaining the whole ecological phenomena where Pope sees in Nature an idea of universal design. This work is a vindication of the ways of God and Nature to the human beings. James Thompson (1700-1748) has written *Seasons* (1730), which is a series of four poems and is one of the most beautiful pieces of Nature poetry that can be compared with the poems of the Romantic writers like William Wordsworth, P. B. Shelley and John Keats. In this long poem that constitutes four poems describing four seasons, *Winter* (1726), *Summer* (1727), *Spring* (1728), and *Autumn* appeared in the complete edition of the whole poem entitled *Seasons* in 1730. Thompson picturesquely describes and venerates all the four major seasons, winter, summer, spring and autumn in the poem. Thompson’s *Seasons* depicts the poet’s sensitiveness to Nature and aptness of natural
William Blake (1757-1827) was awestruck like an innocent child with the beautiful aspects of Nature and has written quite amazingly for children of all ages. His volumes of poetry like *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* (1789) can be counted as most significant of his other writings that exemplify his philosophy about Nature. His approach towards Nature is largely symbolic exemplified through the images of lamb and tiger. In the nineteenth century, the writers came under the influence of Rousseau’s teaching of ‘back to Nature’. Inspired by the teachings of Rousseau, the Romantic poets like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Keats and Shelley returned to the world of Nature in their works. They manifested wild Nature and exuberance of the natural setting in intimately loving manner. William Wordsworth (1770-1850) can be considered as a devout hermit of Nature. A pantheist by Nature, Wordsworth believes in the omnipotent world of Nature. His poems like “Ode on the Intimations of Immortality”, “Daffodils” and his “Ode on Trinity” from his *Lyrical Ballads* (1798) reflect his belief in pantheism and love for the beauty of nature. Samuel Coleridge (1772-1834) provides a supernatural charm to his nature descriptions in his poems. For example in poem “The Rime of the Ancient Mariner”, he paints a mysterious atmosphere. The Romanticists have faith in the intimate relationships between humans and Nature that will prevail for long only if the humans value Nature for its strength and vitality and pay their heartiest gratitude to it for the gifts that it has provided for human use. P. B. Shelley (1792-1822) shows his love for Nature which is a source of energy, vitality, vivacity, strength, and positive inspiration. Nature is a perennial resource that heals and consoles a withered soul. Shelley’s poem “Ode to the West Wind” hails the strength and beauty of Nature and stimulates individuals into action. John Keats (1795-1821) views Nature from different perspective. Nature is considered to be both a true reality and a beautiful artifact as reverberated in “Ode on a Grecian Urn”: “‘Beauty is truth, truth beauty,’- that is all /Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know” (Keats). In the works of Romantic Age, the anthropocentric element is
always present as compared to those of the Eighteenth century. Romanticism is associated with aestheticism that germinates from personal experiences and subjective emotions of the author effectuated by his own environment.

During the Victorian era, Romanticism becomes more nuanced and heterogeneous as it is mixed with the other philosophical and social tendencies that originated in England at that time. The writers and poets of this age mingled the early concepts of the Romantics especially those of Wordsworth with the emerging scientific spirit. *The Origin of Species* (1859) by Charles Darwin has brought a paradigm shift in the field of science during the era influencing the Victorian writers like Lord Tennyson, Matthew Arnold, Thomas Hardy, Charlotte Bronte, and George Eliot who manifest the struggle between humans and Nature. Tennyson (1809-1892) described the harsher aspects of the natural world, manifesting Nature as “red in tooth and claw” (*Tennyson In Memorium*). He demonstrated Nature as indifferent towards the pessimistic state of the humans. He largely concentrated on human emotions while putting Nature in the background as observed in his poems like “The Lotos Eaters” in which the companions of Ulysses become lethargic and drowsy after consuming lotus stems when they reach the island. In his poem “The Song of the Brook”, the swift flow of a stream with its “curve and flow to join the brimming river” can be compared with the twists and turns in the life of man. The eternal quality of the natural objects is also intensified in the poem as the stream here that is given a voice to speak for herself validates this point in the following lines: “I chatter, chatter, as I flow/ To join the brimming river,/ For men may come and men may go/ But I go on forever” (*Tennyson 44*). His poems abound in Nature images of flowers, birds, rivers and geographical landscapes. Another important figure of this age is Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) who is deeply influenced with Wordsworth and his poetical expressions. Arnold's poems such as “Dover Beach”, “Thyrisis”, “The Scholar Gypsy”, and “The Forsaken Merman” equate
the melancholic spirit of his age with the fraught images of Nature. Charlotte Bronte (1816-1855) is a major woman novelist of Victorian era whose novel *Jane Eyre* (1847) exhibits a strong sense of place-connectedness where Nature exerts a symbolic influence upon the protagonists of the novel. This sense of place-connectedness is closely associated with the character of Jane, the female protagonist of the novel. Charles Dickens (1812-1870), one of the great novelists of this era, has written tremendously on social issues in his works like *Hard Times* (1854), *David Copperfield* (1850), *Bleak House* (1853), and so on. In the novel *Bleak House*, Dickens presents a dreary view of London with its “implacable November weather” (Dickens *BH* 1). Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) is also one of the influential writers of this age who writes about Nature and its interconnections with human world. He is a regional novelist writing particularly about the Wessex province in his novels. His nature imagery is symbolic of human emotions and most of his characters in the novels are marred by their passionate instincts that correlate with the intensity of natural life-forces. For example, the personified character of Egdon Heath in *The Return of the Native* (1878) assumes the identity of a living being that exercises its power and control over the fate of other characters. Nature forms an intricate part in the novels of Hardy. The forms of Nature elaborated in his novels symbolize a whole cosmic order that influence the life and actions of his human characters. Nature forms an inherent part of his other novels too such as, *Under the Greenwood Tree* (1872), *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), *The Woodlanders* (1887), *Tess of Du’bervilles* (1891) and others. In Victorian era, the interest towards Nature has grown due to increasing industrialism and influence of Darwinian theory of evolution.

**Nature in American Literature:**

In American literature, the eco-critical perspectives are visible in the writers like James Fennimore Cooper, Walt Whitman, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Herman Melville, John Muir,
Edward Abbey, etc. The American environmental movement has started from the late nineteenth century for the protection of natural resources of the West. The novelist James Fennimore Cooper (1789-1851) has pioneered the cause of environmentalism through his works from his Leather stocking Tales that seem to identify with the American natural environment that appear both as character and as a background to human action. For example in his *Pioneers* (1823), the main theme is the conflict between wilderness and the established society of settlers. These settlers are thoughtlessly destroying the American wilderness which is a rich source of natural resources for their survival. They are deforesting the woods especially the sugar maples and killing a large number of fish from Lake Otsego and the migrating passenger pigeons that appear in every spring. The character, Judge Temple is very much concerned for the squandering of rich treasure of natural resources. Cooper through his novels has tried to give a message to his readers for the conservation and preservation of Nature for its welfare.

With the beginning of Transcendental Movement in America, a change is noticed in the writers’ attitude towards Nature. Anthropomorphism defines the later advancement in literary representations of Nature. The writers focused more on the utilitarian aspect of Nature however they don’t overlook the aesthetic beauty of Nature. Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-1882) can be regarded as one of the famous American transcendentalists who influenced a wide range of writers and poets of America, like Thoreau, Whitman and John Muir. His book *Nature* (1836) exalts not only the pristine beauty of Nature but also the kind of relationship that exists between the human and non-human world. For Emerson, Nature has a two-sided existence, physical and spiritual and on both these planes Nature exists for the use of humanity.

In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life, — no disgrace, no
calamity, (leaving me my eyes,) which Nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground, — my head bathed by the blithe air, and uplifted into infinite spaces, — all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball; I am nothing; I see all; the currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God. (Emerson 10)

Emerson’s theory of transparent eyeball relates to his principle of Transcendentalism and Oversoul where he talks of an all-pervasive abstract form of Nature. One of the most distinguished poets of America, Walt Whitman (1819-1892) veritably describes the land of America in his beautiful collection of poems *Leaves of Grass* (1855). He employs an exquisite imagery of wild Nature and associates it with the identity of his nation. His imagination was immediately sparked by Emerson’s philosophical teachings in transcendentalism. In his poem “Song of the Redwood Tree”, Whitman not only acknowledges the loss of Nature at the hands of the unthinking and unsympathetic humans but also glorifies the sacrifice of the tree considering it essential for the making of an ideal American future.

Herman Melville (1819-1891), another great writer in American literary history is best known for his novel *Moby Dick* (1851) that articulates an eco-centric view of the world. Moby Dick is the name of the whale that is the main protagonist in the novel. The novel is an evocation of the anthropomorphic attitudes that applies to the non-human entity of the whales in general. However, he provides an eco-critique of the conventional anthropomorphic tropes in the novel through the relationship depicted between Captain Ishmael and Moby Dick, the whale. Buell suggests that Melville evocation of “the non-human entity” is a major presence, superior to any human being in the text” (209).

It can be noted that in this undeniably urban culture, nature writing surely assumes a fundamental part in showing us to esteem the
natural world. As Donald Worster suggests most of the Nature essayists sought for a “lost idyllic haven, for a home in a hostile and menacing world” (16). The world of Nature has been painted variously by different literary writers. Realism that has been used vigorously as a concept by certain authors made them to express their natural world and associate their real life experiences and emotions with the ‘real’ Nature. There are Nature writers who articulate their natural love and interests with new definitions of real human-nature interdependencies like John Burroughs (1837-1921) who identifies three things – books, friends and Nature as the most precious resources for life; his book Deep Woods (1990), a collection of Nature essays, that contains some of his lively natural truths the knowledge of which he gathered through his excursions in Nature. Another one of the major ecological writers of America, John Muir (1838-1914) advocates for the preservation of the environment through his own experiences as a preservationist of the Yellowstone National park, Yosemite. He has also authored books like My First Summer in the Sierra (1911), and The Yosemite (1912) based on his nature walks and travels. Edward Abbey (1927-1989) is one of the famous American nature writers and novelists whose work Desert Solitaire (1968) depicts a park ranger’s response to the natural world and is an evocation of the interconnection of a human heart with the ‘wild’ aspect of Nature. Desert Solitaire (1968), which is the principal book by Abbey, is an exemplary of environmental literature that consolidates nature writing, the rationality of life and demise, and political perceptions with respect to opportunity, democratic system, and the administration of National Parks. The other book by Edward Abbey, The Monkey Wrench Gang (1975), made a radical new branch of the ecological development. It advocated the cause of eco-sabotage and eco-activism.

Survey of Literature:
Ecocriticism has been viewed, analyzed and even questioned by various critics from different angles. While preparing the survey of literature, it was observed that there are various ecocritics who have written extensively about ecology and its literary representations. The American eco-critic Lawrence Buell, in his book *The Environmental Imagination: Thoreau, Nature Writing, and the Formation of American Culture* (or *EI*) (1995), provides a view into the dialectics of environmental perception and new findings in order to understand Nature and its relationship with humanity at large. He reflects upon the consequences which the literary scholarship has to face while engaging in an in-depth analysis of the environmental crisis and the subsequent apocalyptic vision where they attempt to imagine one's existence in more “eco-centric” way of life. In the book, Buell has analyzed Thoreau and his theoretical works in great detail.

In his second book on environmental imagination, *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture and Environment in the U. S. and Beyond* (or *EW*) (2001), he analyzes a wide range of texts from America and beyond from the perspectives of eco-criticism tracing in them the embedded socio-environmental concerns that tend to affect the present and the future of the world. He also explains the counter-effects of Nature-culture distinctions and how the cultural influences may create problems of survival for all life-forms in this age of modernization. He talks intensively about the symbolic significance of place-connectedness and how this place-connectedness could lead to the creation of best imaginative works. He also focuses on the discourses of environmental determinism in this work and the need for a change in the connotations of the philosophy of determinism in the field of environmental criticism. The ‘environmental determinism’ also known as climatic or geographical determinism, means the study of the physical environment that appears as the potential cause of certain sociological, economic or political developments. It seeks to regard the natural environment higher than the human beings where the particular natural environment acts as the massive power over the
human beings and is a controlling influence over the character and the actions of the human beings.

In his another work, *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination* (or *FEC*) (2005), Buell recognizes the significance of the literary models and various critical approaches to literature that constitute the field of ecocriticism in counteracting with the problem of environmental crisis. He shows in this work how ecocriticism has come to take shape from its previous engagement in the discourses of Nature and its preservation as has been reflected in the Nature writings and Nature-poetry to acquire a more advanced stage of dealing with the issues of ecological vision and environmental justice.

In Greg Garrard’s *Ecocriticism: A Reader* (2004), the author presents us with the most basic ideas about ecocriticism as well as with the most recent studies related to this field of thought. In order to understand a complex thread of deeper truths that underlie this school of thought in a best possible way, this book is a great read that takes its readers through the different levels of understanding of the major concepts of the ecocritical idiom. Garrard has the view that ecocriticism is an all-inclusive term that has affinities with certain areas or disciplines like Ecology (at the foremost), science, Marxism, politics, religion, history, psychology, socialism, gender studies or Feminism and so the list continues.

*The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* (1996) edited by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm contains a set of critical essays and articles that articulate certain literary and non-literary trends in the analysis of the intimate relationship lying between Nature and the human society in the terms of an artistic representation. This is a collection of the essays and articles by different writers who have figured out their ideas around the framework of ecological theories. One of the essays in the book entitled “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism”
(1976) is written by William Rueckert who is the first to introduce the term “ecocriticism” in English Literature. He talks about the role of literature in expressing ecological concerns through the representation of the human-Nature relationship. He considers the literary writers, poets, and artists as lawyers who articulate the rights of mute beings and raise their concerns through their works.

The book *This Fissured Land: An Ecological History of India* (1992) by Madhav Gadgil and Ramachandra Guha presents a historical account of the ecology of India and recounts the human ways of exploiting the ecological resources of India from its pre-modern times to the British colonial rule. This book studies in a unique manner the socio-historical nuances of Indian ecological realities. It re-interprets the effect of colonialism and oppressive caste system prevalent in India during the times of pre-colonial and colonial era co-relating it with the generalizations of ecological history.

The English critic, Jonathan Bate, in his book *The Song of the Earth* (2000), reflects upon the growing alienation of humans from Nature and the contribution and the capacities of poets and writers in bringing us back in the lap of Nature by arousing an interest and awareness in the readers about certain environmental issues. He examines certain texts by different writers that contain the dialectics of Nature as well as insights of environmental consciousness. He, herein, traces the growth and development in the philosophies and observations of certain poets of Nature.

In Timothy Morton’s *Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics* (2007), the author tries to convey his ideas about a very radical concept of ecology sans Nature and provides the readers with a distinct theory of ecological criticism. He avers that Nature has been ordained by the human world as something that is ‘over there’ and does not exist in the midst of the human society but that which lies at its outside edge. It is also maintained that it has no intrinsic identity, but actually, it constitutes no identity at all. This is
one of the most foolish thoughts that occupied the mind of the
cultural society of men that does not ascribe any consciousness to the
Natural world of beings and denies them any entry into its ‘safe’
shelter or place.

Morton’s second book *The Ecological Thought* (2012) is a
prequel to *Ecology without Nature* (2007) where he postulates that an
ecological thought precedes any understanding of the critical issues
pertaining to the terms ‘ecology’ and ‘Nature’ and all of the
subsequent actions that take place in lieu of these terms tend to
generate eco-consciousness among individuals.

In the book *Postcolonial Ecocriticism: Literature, Animals,
Environment* (2010), Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin tend to re-
examine the human-animal relationships in the context of the
Postcolonial paradigms. They trace the politics of colonialism that is
inherent in the whole social construct that is also applied to the
Western domination of natural organisms. This book evaluates how
the oppressive ideology of the West tends to subordinate the inferior
classes or the race. This inferior race is characterized by both the
coloured races and the natural world.

Gunnar Rundgren who is a Swedish writer, is “well known in
the international organic community as an articulate leader,
consultant, theorist, and practitioner of organic agriculture
worldwide” (Gershuny) and has written a critical work upon the
socio-ecological perspectives that is entitled as *Garden Earth: From
Hunter and Gatherer to Global Capitalism and Thereafter* (2013)
published in its English translation. It is a book of great interest to
social ecologists “for its political and philosophical stance that offers
unapologetic anti-capitalist insights and well-founded information
about the evolution and current status of global food production and
distribution systems” (Gershuny). This book also provides several
references to Bookchin and other left-libertarian thinkers, at the same
time deconstructing the views of some of the more pernicious ‘free
market’ theorists. The book covers a wider and broader perspective “towards wider adoption of organic practices” (Gershuny) through a rational discourse.

Carolyn Merchant’s *Radical Ecology* (1992) is a work of great concern for the ecologists as it evokes certain environmental concerns and presents a critique of various ecological theories (such as social ecology, deep ecology, etc.) paving the way for a more stable, non-conformist and revolutionary form of ecology called radical ecology.

After this extensive critical survey of secondary sources on eco-critical aspects of literary scholarship, one can deduce that although the eco-criticism is a new field of study but the critics have brought it to a high and distinctive level of signification whereby coordinating, and co-relating it with various other theories like Romanticism, Marxism, Feminism, Socialism, Post-structuralism, Post-colonialism, Psychology etc. they have opened up variegated interpretations of this field. Now, there is eco-Marxism, ecofeminism, social ecology, ecopsychology, eco-spirituality and much more such theories which show that Nature today can be perceived from varied perspectives.

The thesis concentrates on providing a definite view of the present state of green studies that has arrived at such a stage as to unite Nature, ecology and literary studies into one organized whole and reinforce an organic entity upon this hybridized concept that has a tendency to support the Western notions of Culture versus Nature or Human versus Nature debate. For the research study, the Nature writings that have been taken up are Thoreau’s *Walden* (1854), Rachel Carson’s *The Silent Spring* (1962), Khushwant Singh’s *Nature Watch* (1990), and Starhawk’s *The Earth Path* (2004). Besides these, four Nature novels: George Eliot’s *The Mill on the Floss* (1860), Ernest Callenbach’s *Ecotopia* (1975), Khushwant Singh’s *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* (1959), and Starhawk’s *The Fifth Sacred Thing* (1993)
have also been taken up for an analysis of the ecological thought that lies in the texture of these works.

The first chapter, entitled “Ecological Dynamism: An Interplay between Literature and Ecology” is introductory in Nature and serves as a blueprint of the entire work. It would spotlight seminal issues of the environment and the urgency to bring them to public awareness and also to subject them to an ecological analysis. It will then go on to define ecology, its perspectives and ecological footprint that are major taxonomic perspectives in environmental criticism. It would also study the reasons and significance of the evolution of Nature studies and how Nature has been represented in certain literary genres. The chapter would discuss the development of a new literary theory of Eco-criticism, its definition and its pioneers and subsequent theorists such as Cheryll Glotfelty, William Rueckert, William Howarth, Sueellen Campbell, Lawrence Buell, Timothy Morton, Greg Garrard etc. who have taken up different issues related to this field. Then it would trace the genesis of the theory of Green Studies found in the British Romanticism and American Transcendentalism that later evolved into a larger coherent whole. It will also enumerate the influential eco-critical texts that have been useful in locating and re-locating the paradigms of Nature and environmental issues in certain works of art, (literary and non-literary) looking out for their new and eclectic centres of significance. This chapter also incorporates into its texture the religious and spiritual philosophy of Nature that perceives the entire natural existence in its correlation with the immanent presence of the Universal Soul that is wrapped in the monastic vision of the sacred Earth.

The second chapter entitled “Footprints of Ecological Criticism: Ecology and Literary Traditions” discusses the significance of environmental texts in creating awareness among readers about the utility of Nature for humanity. It describes ecocriticism and relates the three stages of its development with the works taken up for study.
It endeavours to show how the principles of ecocriticism are largely based on the philosophy of deep ecology which has been defined and explained in detail in this chapter. Various proponents of ecocriticism and deep ecology have also been enlisted along with their related views. It also enlists certain advocates of deep ecology Arne Naess, Lawrence Buell, Timothy Morton, Vandana Shiva, Wendel Berry, and so on. The chapter discusses the major developments in the field of ecocriticism with its centre of focus shifted to the dialectics of climate change theories and recent talks on Anthropocene and global environmental crises.

The third chapter entitled “Revisiting the Majestic Nature: An Eco-Mimetic Analysis of Selected Nature-Writings” concentrates on the subtle philosophies of Nature writers who have built their sublime notions regarding the natural surroundings by engaging themselves in a quiet communion with Nature and its inhabitants. The chapter analyzes selected nature writings from an eco-mimetic perspective discussing the authors’ outlook upon their natural environment. Nature writing refers to the nonfictional prose that describes a natural environment written in first person narrative and delving on significant scientific information and facts about the natural world; nature writings may also incorporate the author’s personal observations and philosophical reflections on Nature. Henry David Thoreau is regarded as the sire of the American Nature-writing. He has written various books on Nature and the one which is considered to be his masterpiece is *Walden, or Life in the Woods* (1854) that has been taken up for study besides others. The other writings are Rachel Carson’s *The Silent Spring* (1962), Starhawk’s *The Earth Path* (2004), and Khushwant Singh’s *Nature Watch* (1990). Rachel Carson’s *The Silent Spring* heralds the beginning of perceiving the counter-effects of culture upon Nature that has not only sterilized its reproductive power but at the same time through the excessive use of pesticides in farming has eroded the quality of the soils resulting in the culling of beneficial micro-organisms; whereas in *Walden*, Thoreau has reflected
upon his experiences in the natural world and personal outlook towards Nature including his wise philosophies concerning the environment. Rachel Carson opens up a pioneering field of environmental consciousness blended with her scientific observations of the dark fears that underlie the crust of all ecological impressions. Her book *The Silent Spring*, published in 1962, is an eye-opening account of the impending threats to the stability and progression of the biological Earth. After a thorough examination of men’s ill-devised ways and methods for eradication of pests and weeds that are seen as injurious to health, crops, farms, and gardens, Carson dedicates her study to the detailed analysis of the after-effects of the use of pesticides upon the living beings, soil and water. Starhawk who is an American writer, eco-feminist, critic, and a “witch” offers a new and distinctive outlook of freeing Nature from the clutches of modernized culture. She provides a solution in the practice of permaculture which is defined as “permanent agriculture” or “permanent culture”. Her work *The Earth Path* is a travel into the dialectics of permaculture and spiritual world of natural surroundings.

The next author, Khushwant Singh has expressed his love for Nature in his diary *Nature Watch* which was published in 1990. It presents his close observations of Nature that has enveloped him in its glory since his childhood.

The fourth chapter “Simulating the Rhythms of Nature: A Study of Selected Nature Novels” provides an in-depth analysis of the novels that deal with the realistic details of exquisite natural descriptions reviving sense-impressions and bringing in a world of conspicuous characters that are at once passionate and life-like arousing deeply felt emotions in the hearts. After enlisting the features of utopian and dystopian fiction with their examples, the chapter traces these features in the nature novels taken up for study and analyzes them with an ecocritical perspective. The Nature novels that have been picked up for the exploration of the particular Nature-oriented stance exhibited in them are George Eliot’s *The Mill on the
Archana

*Foss* (1860), Khushwant Singh’s *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* (1959), Starhawk’s *The Fifth Sacred Thing* (1993), and Ernest Callenbach’s *Ecotopia* (1975). George Eliot seems to be influenced by Darwinian theories of evolution and Wordsworthian descriptions of Nature that get reflected in her pastoral novel *The Mill on the Floss* where she also encounters the problem of the cultural domination of the world of Nature and the materialistic view of Nature. This novel can be regarded as an ecological exploration of the materialistic society that directs its control over the naïve minds of children and the innocent Nature. This work has been analyzed from the Romantic viewpoint. In the novel, the interactions of the natural world with the human world as well as the characterization of the relationship between childhood and Nature can be compared with Wordsworthian descriptions of ‘childhood in Nature’ at the same intensity level. Khushwant Singh’s *I Shall Not Hear the Nightingale* deals with the insensible and cruel killing of a pair of Sarus cranes (considered as love-birds) for one’s vested interests, that is, for learning marksmanship skills. It presents a spiritual aspect towards the love of Nature. However, the novel’s main theme is the Indian struggle for freedom against the imperial rule of the British. *The Fifth Sacred Thing* by Starhawk, an American writer, is also an environmental novel which is an elaboration of the insights and ideologies of its author. This novel presents a contrast between two types of societies, i.e., utopian and the dystopian. It is set in California that is divided into two parts, the North, and the South. The community in the North is largely organized by the female leaders where there is no hierarchy among the people and is based on the principles of equality, liberty, and fraternity. On the other hand, in the South people are divided into two groups, the Stewards and the Millenialists living in dystopian conditions. Ernest Callenbach is another American novelist who through his novel *Ecotopia* tends to express a prophetic vision of a futuristic society where the characters live in ecologically sound and healthy conditions. This work is an environmental classic that stimulates our Earth consciousness. The ecotopian people do not mess
up with Nature neither they involve in any Nature-harming activities rather they prefer to live economically and sustainably. They have adopted eco-friendly ways and habits and have developed ecologically sustainable designs such as mini-cities, solar charged mini-buses, wind-power plants, and so on. All these four novels capture the eco-mimetic representations of life and Nature so closely that they tend to evoke the tranquil emotions of the readers and transcend them away to the aesthetic world of the characters.

The fifth chapter “Environmental Criticism and its Futuristic Vision” sums up the terrain of eco-critical assumptions and tries to provide suggestions to some of the labyrinthine issues put forth in the introductory chapter. It attempts to bring forth the relevance of preceding chapters in dealing with the more crucial issues of our environment and questioning the dialectics of ecological theory, whether or not the theory alone would be able to bring out the marked change in the entire scenario. It consists of the findings of the research that relocation of Nature and environment into their rightful places, at the same time instilling back into them the sap of pure life may help in recreating a sound vision of life, a balanced self, an affinity with the natural life and in maintaining a symbiotic and healthy relationship between human and Nature.

To sum up, all the five chapters concentrate upon one unified idea of perceiving Nature and ecology in terms of the critical notions prevalent about these wider concepts as they appear in several literary forms where they are attached with larger contexts of significance. The present research is an endeavour to unite the diversified ecological impressions treasured in a wide variety of Nature books or articles centred upon environmental imagination and issues. Nature studies have taken miscellaneous stance by certain literary authors. Hitherto, the literary representations of nature used to consider the figurative use of nature depictions that were treated symbolically or metaphorically. But in the recent nature studies, it has taken
miscellaneous stance where new theories have been developed to analyze ecological representations in literature. Certain eco-critical models are in practice today that have been described in the thesis.
Works Cited


