CHAPTER I

ECOCRITICISM: A THEORETICAL FRAME

Introduction:

The present chapter attempts to explore the conceptual meaning of the term ‘ecocriticism’ with its pragmatic implications in the context of different disciplines and especially in the context of literary criticism. The chapter undertakes a brief review of the definitions and critical opinions of theorists on ecocriticism in order to set certain parameters that can be generalized in the discipline of cultural studies and literary criticism. The attempt is made to point out certain literary tendencies that occur frequently in the artifacts created by the ecocritical authors. The theoretical frame prepared in this chapter will help to sustain the central research statement in the subsequent chapters and illustrate it in a textual context.

The term ecocriticism simply refers to the critical enquiry of relationship between man and nature as reflected in the literary artifacts. It is also considered that the environmental criticism studies the nature in literary work of art. The word nature has multiple shades of meaning and has multiplicity of ideas, therefore is a highly complex and problematic term. The concept of nature has played many symbolic and ideological roles at various phases of historical progress of the earth. It has always occupied the pivotal role as a concept in philosophical discourses of every region of all time. The age of Enlightenment was perhaps an exception as the era was obsessed with reason and scientific progress. But it is seen that the nature and man’s relation to nature regained crucial importance in the discourse during last decades of twentieth century. It has gained importance due to the growth of speculated environmental
awareness evolving from the predictions about the approaching ecological crises and consequential destruction of earth.

In the ancient time, nature was considered as living organism and had equal importance like human beings. Nature was not considered as passive but an “active complex that participates in change over time and responses to human induced change” (Revolutions 08). But gradually nature has lost its glorious past due to the self-centered attitude of man. As a result, nature has lost what is natural about it due to excessive human interaction and interference. The root cause behind the faded identity of nature lies in the wrongly constructed milieu by human consciousness in socio-cultural and religious tradition. Nature is being socially constructed by human consciousness in different ways in different historical epochs and cultures. An enquiry in past about the man’s relation with nature would make it clear that the origin of present environmental crises is in the discourses and practices of cultural tradition of man. These cultural traditions have developed a sense of anthropocentric arrogance in human beings. In his article entitled “The Historical Roots of Our Ecological Crisis”, Lynn White, Jr. criticizes Judeo-Christian religion’s selfish anthropocentric viewpoint which assumes dominating attitude of man towards nature. In the human history after the victorious development over paganism, Christianity made all its efforts to establish the dominance of man over all other entities of the earth. It preached being the prototype of god he could have access to utilize every entity of the earth and consequently encouraging him to have dominion over its creatures. This view made a divide between man and nature and helped to reconfirm man’s superiority by asserting that it is God’s will that man exploit nature for his benefit. White observes
In Antiquity every tree, every spring, every stream, every hill had its own genius loci, its guardian spirit. These spirits were accessible to men, but were very unlike men; centaurs, fauns, and mermaids show their ambivalence. Before one cut a tree, mined a mountain, or dammed a brook. It was important to placate the spirit in charge of that particular situation and to keep it placated. By destroying pagan animism, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature in a mood of indifference to the feelings of natural objects. (ER 10)

The above observation makes it clear how the Christianity abolishing the environmental bend of thought of paganism established the anti-environmental standpoint among human beings. Beside White, in his article “Nature and Silence” Christopher Manes also censored the Christian exegesis for making propaganda of moral truth established by God to utilize natural resources ruthlessly for human end and abandoning animists approach which gave equal importance to non-human entities of environment. He points out that “animals, plants and even “inert” entities such as stones and rivers are perceived as being articulate and at times intelligible subjects, able to communicate and interact with humans for good or ill” (15). According to him, animist could successfully avoid the environmental destruction which is going on excessively in the present time due to the inculcated self-destructive anti-environmental ideas by Christianity.

Likewise, the rapid development in science in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries shakes the medieval beliefs of earth and instead of considering earth as living being people began to believe earth as a machine. For instance, Galileo and Rene Descartes considered material
world including living beings could be analyzed like machine in small parts to understand completely. Newtonian theory also proposed the view that universe as a perfect machine governed by mathematical laws that led human beings far away from considering universe as living organism.

Harold Fromm has beautifully analyzed the historically vary relationship between man and nature. He shows how the man’s dependency on nature ends and man begins to dominate nature with the help of industrial revolution and technological developments. While commenting ignorance of humanity at large about the relationship between man and nature in his article “From Transcendence to Obsolescence” he says, “Western man does not generally live in fear of Nature, except when earthquakes and cancer strike, for he is mostly unaware of a connection with Nature that has artfully concealed by modern technology”. He is of the opinion that man has wrongly gained the mental assurance of domination over nature.

The philosophy of Humanism is also not less responsible to create a dangerous dichotomy between man and nature. By its pompous elaboration on nobility of the human race and human intelligence and capabilities, it started nurturing a supreme confidence in human beings that he could tame and subdue nature with the help of science and technology. This philosophy compelled human beings to have blind faith in science and technology. As a result, man having humanistic assumption of superiority, has destroyed the closeness and kinship with nature which was there in the past. However, the close scrutiny of the view of humanism reveals that humanism has unnecessarily developed a kind of arrogance which has created the dangerous dichotomy between man and nature. The scholars E. M. W. Tillyard and A. O. Lovejoy in their 1936 work, *The Great Chain of Being: The History of an Idea* argued that the universe could be recognized with a vast filigree of lower
and higher forms. Humans were assumed to be endowed with “divine powers such as reason, love, and imagination”. The very feature of reason differentiates human beings from rest of the earthly entities and consequently it makes them superior and prime in rank.

As far as the discourse of the great chain of being is concerned, Christopher Manes has put forth the different stand points. According to him for medieval exegete the Great Chain of Being “at times acted as a theological restraint against abusing the natural world” (20) E.R. but later on the philosophical discourses of Renaissance and Humanism drastically transformed the original idea of the great chain of being and formed “a new configuration of thought that would eventually be called humanism converted it from a symbol of human restraint in the face of a perfect order to an emblem of human superiority over the natural world”. (20) E.R. He criticized the approaches of Renaissance and humanism for dismantling the all-inclusive approach of great chain to persuade the human superiority. He said

The Great chain of Being, exegesis, literacy, and a complex skein of institutional and intellectual developments have, in effect, created a fictionalized, or more accurately put, fraudulent version of the species Homo sapiens: the character “Man” what Muir calls “Lord Man.” And this “Man” has become the sole subject, speaker, and rational sovereign of the natural order in the story told by humanism since the Renaissance. (21) E.R.

He systematically explained how the universal approach of great chain, which was insisting for harmonious existence, is being dismantled and projected differently for its own end by humanism.
The present age of environmental anxiety has compelled human to realize that it is necessary to reconsider hitherto accepted assumptions. It is high time for man to turnaround and to reconsider the existing cultural assumptions like Christian, humanistic, technological before it is too late. The modern man with its reduced and circumscribed landscapes in the modern world has to explore natural systems as ecosystem of the world is the only entity which offers patterns of survival. The revised version of hitherto accepted assumptions can be found in the philosophy of deep ecology which stresses the need to establish communication between human and non-human world that is natural world. It insists for human initiative to listen the echo of non-human world and reverse the environmentally destructive practices of modern man. For such healthy communication we require eco-sensible language and this language should be free from the “directionalities of humanism, a language that incorporates a decentered, post-modern, post-humanist perspective” (ER 16-17). Likewise, Glen Love insists to establish bond with non-human world as the urgent requirement of time. He, in his article Revaluing Nature: Toward an Ecological Criticism, points out

Many ecologically conscious readers have apparently turned to nature writing as the clearest and most direct antidote to the presumption of total human dominance and control presumption that has fueled not only myriad environmental crises but the unquestioned and unquestioning anthropocentrism of most academic discourses as well. Looking at, listening to, the natural world seems act of sanity, of deference to natural systems and communities that work and survive – in a world context of momentous human mismanagement. (WAL 25:203)
Glen argues that how approaching ecological crises are preparing human to abandon hitherto practiced dominance over nature and he proposes that it would be an act of sanity if we listen to and look at nature as comrade.

The growing environmental awareness is seen through the gradual historical development of the world. For example, it is seen that the first settlers of New England were initially fascinated and influenced by mechanistic views of scientific revolution and consequently they used this scientific knowledge to bring nature under their control. They saw wilderness as nasty and evil. In contrast of first settlers, the new settlers began to see ‘Promised Land’ could be shaped like natural heaven with human enterprise and efforts. Americans began to view nature with a kind of pride. This national pride stimulated further kindly attitude toward non-human entity of the earth which in turn proved the basis for the Romantic view of nature in the nineteenth century. It is said that Romanticism was, partially, a “reaction against the mechanization of nature, which came about as a consequence of the scientific revolution and against the pervasive image of the universe as a machine” (Earthkeeping139). Transcendentalism was considered as another form of romanticism in America and the exponent of it were Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Emerson. They contributed a lot to influence the American thought and attitude toward nature. Transcendent mind and its awareness make Thoreau to appreciate natural world deeply and to criticize the tendency of manipulating natural resources ruthlessly. These New England Romantics begin to describe nature with personal touch and emotion.

Hence one can say that twentieth century New England is an outcome of colonial and capitalist ecological revolutions through various phases of historical development. The menacing effect of industrial
capitalism on the nature is thoroughly described by Carolyn Merchant. She writes “acid precipitation from the smokes of the East and Midwest has attacked New England’s crops, trees and shrubs. Sulfur dioxide and Ozone emissions have damaged the coniferous forests” (Revolutions 262). Merchant presents picturesque panorama of growth in technology and computer-based industries which alter the human perception of the earth. She says:

Computer advertisements and popular media depict the earth variously as electronically wired; encircled by floating cars, calculators and computers; enclosed within laboratory flasks; squeezed by human hands and lemon juicers; and demonstrated by oversized white males standing on its surface. The symbols of nature that permeate and structure modern consciousness present a mechanized artificial, instrumental nature. It has become completely mechanical, having lost any semblance of organic life. (262)

She points out how the influence of growing technology has altered the natural living structure of the earth and transformed it into an artificial, mechanical, and instrumental comfort hub in which nothing is natural. The human perception is altered in such way to believe that it is an innovation of superior mind by which creative revitalization of the natural world is possible.

It is proved that the assumption of human superiority over nature on the basis of his scientific revolution are leading human and his earth towards the ecological crisis that would destroy everything. The present age is an age of uncertainty and ecological global crisis. Every news agencies of the world are discussing currents issues such as Climate
Change, Loss of Biodiversity, Global Warming, Ozone Deterioration, Acid Rain, Species Extinction, and Dead Zones in the Ocean. Therefore, it is necessary now to take a step ahead to save our earth. In order to become eco-conscious and eco-sensitive, one has to adopt and study the discourses which hold the views of kindness towards nature and reject the human tenancy to practice dominance over nature through his scientific progress. In the present age of global crisis which is full of mega machines and grand masters of science, ecological thinking offers the views that would help to enhance the new relationship between human and environment and which consequentially can restore the health of our planet. This thinking proposes a shift in paradigm, to which Bill Devall describes as “a shorthand description of the world view, the collection of values, beliefs, habits, and norms which forms the frame of reference of a collectivity of people” (34).

Merchant has described the characteristics of an ecological paradigm. According to her, an ecological paradigm encourages new assumption about ecosystem and totally rejects the mechanistic paradigm which is not eco-friendly at all. Ecological paradigm believes that everything is connected and depends on everything else in an integrated universe. This belief of web-like interconnectedness is the main principle of ecological discourse which becomes the prime assumption in almost every works of ecologists and eco-conscious writers. Second principle of ecology is that a whole of the universe is greater than sum of its part. Like human, the non-human nature is also active, dynamic and responsive. It also assumes that human and nature as unified whole. She also discusses the difference between of eco-centric view and mechanistic view. Mechanism assumes an ethic of “natural rights” which allows an individual to use natural recourses ruthlessly for his own end and interest.
On the other side, an eco-centric view believes in network of mutual obligations instead on the ethics of natural rights.

**Ecocriticism as a Literary Theory: Its origin and definitions**

There are ample works in the world of literature to site which are dealing with beauty and enormous power of nature. Though nature has been the subject of literature since ancient time, still the concern for ecology and threat of ecological crisis posed on humanity as a result of continuous misuse of our environment have recently caught the attention of various discourses. Like other discourse, this sense of concern and continuous ecological delineation in literature by various writers of different ages from ancient time has given impetuous to a new branch of literary theory, called as Ecocriticism. The study of literature has been since long time engaged with historical approaches. However, in recent years, literary critics are seen taking much more interest in the study of relationship between literature and geography. It seems that they are trying to draw insights from the joint study of these two fields. Nature and literature is always seen having close relationship and it has its evidences in the works of poets and other writers through many ages in almost all cultures of the world despite of more or less differences. Therefore, now a day the intimate relationship between non-human world and human world is being analyzed and highlighted in all departments of knowledge and development. The literary critics are trying to study how this close relationship between nature and man has been keenly depicted by the writers in their works of art.

There is no unanimity among scholars whether to include human culture in the physical world. But ecological criticism assumes as its basic principle that human culture is associated with physical world despite of
the broad scope for inquiry. Ecological criticism believes that human culture is affecting the physical world and affected by it. Ecocriticism is a broad genre and is being known by many titles such as green cultural studies, eco-poetics and environmental literary criticism. Generally, literary criticism while analyzing literary artifact takes into consideration the relations between writer, text and “the world”. Most of the other literary theories consider “the world” synonymously associated with society or social sphere. In case of Ecocriticism, “the world” has broader meaning and it tends to expand the notion in order to include the entire ecosphere. Ecocriticism adopts an earth-centered approach to literary criticism. It does not just mean to apply ecology and ecological principles to the study of literature, but a theoretical approach to the liter-relational webs of natural and supernatural cultural phenomena. The aim of ecocriticism is to encourage people to contemplate seriously about the aesthetic and ethical dilemmas emerged from environmental crisis. It also stimulates to think on the transmission of values with profound ecological implication in language and literature.

The considerable increase in the numbers of eco-conscious writers in the recent years has made easy way for the emergence of a new kind of critical approach called Ecocriticism. In spite of being fairly recent but still it is considered as rapidly developing concept in the region of Literary Criticism. It has established itself as a modern ecological literary study and is known accepted as a vital critical approach to literature. Ecocriticism does not just through light on the ‘harmony’ of human beings and nature but also critically argues about the harm caused to nature by unruly changes done by human action. Ecocriticism through its philosophy is trying to give a new meaning to the place, setting and environment. Eco-critics are desperate to form an ecological perception
of nature so that to change the ways humans inhabit the earth and be the orderly creature of the earth. Hence, Ecocriticism is a rapidly changing critical approach and is different from the traditional approaches to literature. In this approach critics, in the context of a work of art, are seen interested to explore the local or global, the material or physical, the historical or natural history. This approach to literature is often considered an interdisciplinary because while analyzing literary text its cities knowledge of environmental studies, natural sciences, cultural and social studies.

Ecocriticism as a critical approach to literature is based on the principles of ecology. Therefore, it is necessary to know the origin and its implication in the Ecocritical literary criticism. The term ‘ecology’ was used for the first time in 1876 by a German biologist and philosopher of evolution Ernst Heinrich Haeckel (1834-1919). The term, ‘ecology’ is derived from German ‘Oecologie’ implicating “the branch of biology that deals with the relationships between living organism and their environment” (Johnston 193). The etymological analysis refers to the Greek word ‘oikos’+ ‘logos’ which means in turn the knowledge of the household science. Selvamony in book Oikospoetics states that “the oikos integrates the natural, the cultural and the sacred” (314). Ecology in a sense is not a binary relationship between organism and the environment. Ecology rather includes the interrelationship among the environment, society and the individual. Thus an analysis of a literary text on the basis of these three components is known as “Oikiocriticism” or “Oikopoetics”.

In this sense, Ecocriticism implies a criticism of “house”, environment as reflected in the works of literature. The word ‘environment’ owes to the physical surroundings in totality including circumstances, conditions as influenced by human activity. The Collins
Dictionary of Environmental Science states that “physical environment” is the mixture of external conditions which cast impact on the life of individual organism. There is a basic fundamental concept of ecology that everything is interconnected and nothing can be separated. This ecological concern unknowingly is the subject of literature for a long time and after its awareness it becomes the focal point of discussion in the discourse of ecocriticism.

Unanimously it is considered that the term ecocriticism is coined by William Rueckert in 1978 in his essay “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism” though sometimes it is opined that the term “Ecocriticism as a concept first arose in the late 1970’s at meetings of the WLA (the Western Literature Association, a body whose field of interests the literature of the American West).” Rueckert states that ecocriticism is an “application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature, because ecology has the greatest relevance to the present and future of the world we all live” (The Ecocriticism Reader 1996:107). All possible relation between literature and physical world is implied in the definition of Rueckert. His definition points out the fundamentals of Ecocriticism on which it is based.

Being emerging literary theory different thinkers and critics has used and perceived approach variously and, accordingly, tried to define the term “ecocriticism” in different ways. However, despite of different expression their basic concern is seen similar and they are seen generally focusing on the relationship between man and the earth. In a way, Ecocriticism studies literature and environment from an interdisciplinary mode where all sciences put their collective efforts to analyze the environment in order to offer possible solutions for the current
environmental situation. The interdisciplinary nature of ecocriticism helps to structure a weird boundary between the sciences and the humanities.

The official beginning of the Ecocriticism was considered with the publication of two seminal works entitled *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996) by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm and Lawrence Buell’s *The Environmental Imagination* (1995). Cheryll Glotfelty is the pioneer of Eco-critics in the United States of America. She defines the term ecocriticism as

> Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centered approach to literary studies (1996: xviii).

In her definition she is pointing out the basic tool of ecocriticism is to analyze the depiction of nature in the works of literary art and comparing it with Feminism and Marxism, she is trying to show that it is a more political mode of analysis. Eco-critics generally in their analysis associate cultural analyses to green moral and political outline. In this way, ecocriticism implies ecology-oriented developments in philosophy and political theory.

Lawrence Buell in his work entitled *Writing for an endangered world* defines ecocriticism:
… as a study of the relationship between literature and the environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis. (Buell, 2001, p.20).

Buell and Glotfelty are in their definitions seen maintaining the basic idea of relationship between human and non-human world. Camilo Gomides is another ecocritic who defines the term ecocriticism in his article entitled ‘Putting a New Definition of Ecocriticism to the Test: The Case of The Burning Season, a film (mal) Adaptation’ and proposes an answer to the questions like what is ecocriticism or should be? He makes use of this definition as testing tool for a film (mal) adaptation in regard of Amazonian deforestation. He defines it as

The field of enquiry that analyzes and promotes works of art which raise moral questions about human interactions with nature, while also motivating audiences to live within a limit that will be binding over generations. (16)

It becomes clear that he wants to suggest that ecocriticism is such a critical enquiry which raises the ethical values of human beings and promotes harmony in human and non-human world for peaceful co-existence.

Likewise, Estok also defines ecocriticism in his article entitled ‘Shakespeare and Ecocriticism’ but he tries to broaden the scope of ecocriticism. He does not agree to assume ecocriticism as just environmental perspective to literature. Estok recently points out while extending ecocriticism to Shakespearean studies that ecocriticism is not just
simply the study of Nature or natural things in literature; rather, it is any theory that is committed to effecting change by analyzing the function–thematic, artistic, social, historical, ideological, theoretical, or otherwise–of the natural environment, or aspects of it, represented in documents (literary or other) that contribute to material practices in material worlds. (16)

The definition proposed by Simon Estok entails the functional approach of ecocriticism which owes to the cultural ecology. He intends to analyze the function of natural environment reflected in imaginative text which contributes to practice of cultural system.

**Growth of Ecocriticism as a Literary Theory:**

The implication of ecocriticism can be traced back in the domain of the pastoral tradition for a long time as it used to reflect the relationship between literature and physical world. Though ecological implication in literature were old one still the word ‘ecology’ has emerged only in the end of 1960’s from a subfield of biology to include interaction among organisms and their environment as an interdisciplinary broad perspective. Probably being based on interdisciplinary perspective, from its emergence ecocriticism has flourished from the study of American nature writers to varied and different fields such as various literary genres, cultural and literary theories even drawing upon natural and social sciences. Hence eco-critics are seen working on many projects with an intention of the welfare of ecosystem. For this purpose, they are employing eco-philosophy, environmental ethics, ecology, biology of evolution, eco-psychology and other related fields.
David Mazel has argued and proved in his book *A Century of Early Criticism* (2003) that American studies and pastoral criticism used to make critical enquiry about picturesque delineation of nature in literature and aestheticism of it. However, current ecocriticism seems a consequential result of environmental awareness of 1960’s and 1970’s ecocriticism. He says

Unlike today’s ecocriticism, which seems so clearly an offshoot of the environmental awareness of the 1960s and 1970s, the early ecocriticism of this collection seems to have been prompted only indirectly by environmentalism itself.

(3)

The word ‘century’ in the title of the book corresponds to 1864-1964. He has given the list of more than thirty proto-Eco-critics who were dealing with almost all concepts and assumption of ecocriticism during this period.

After 1970 the issue of the relationship between literature and nature gets impetus and becomes the focal point of serious and widespread discussion among scholars and writer. The writings of William Rueckert, Joseph Meeker and Neil Evernden become the influential works of environmental critical approach to literature. Joseph Meeker is of the opinion that being literary and civilized creature of the earth, it is the prime duty of human being to discover the role of literature for determining the welfare of mankind and ecology as well. In his influential work entitled *The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology* (1974) Meeker states that
If the creation of literature is an important characteristic of the human species, it should be examined carefully and honestly to discover its influence upon human behavior and the natural environment, and to determine what role, if any, it plays in the welfare and survival of humanity, and what insight it offers into human relationships with other species and with the world around us. Is it an activity that adapts us better to life on earth … does literature contribute more to our survival than it does to our extinction? (3-4).

The prospective and ideas of these text formed the basis for the growth and development of emerging field now known as ecocriticism as a literary criticism. Some cultural scholars and literary critics during the period of 1970s were forming the theory and critical procedure on the basis of ecology and environmental science but they could not make their critical enquiry as are cognized practice or doctrine. As David Mazel argues that

Prior to the emergence of environmental literary studies as an academic field in the late 1980s, there was no discourse of ecocriticism per se. What ecocriticism there was necessarily appeared elsewhere, typically as part of the more general discourses of nature writing, scholarship and criticism, and environmentalism. (3)

Hence everyone was inventing the tools of critical enquiry of ecocritical approach of literature in isolation. Being unorganized each of them was shouting in wilderness. There were either considered nature critic or scholar of environmentalism but could not establish their writing under the rubric of ecocriticism.
Officially Ecocriticism got its recognition as a literary discipline only in the 1990’s. The writings of Thoreau and Emerson worked as matrix for the development of ecocriticism. Thoreau’s *Journal* is the starting point as it contained psychological tradition in American nature writing and which analyzes and interpret the author’s internal response to the world around him. Scott Slovie comments upon the Thoreauvian method as such

> With the 1990 Earth Day celebration now more than five years behind us, it is clear that the Thoreauvian process of awakening is not merely a timeless private quest, but a timely—even urgent—requirement if we are to prevent or at least retard the further destruction of our planet. But how can nature writers’ lead the way in this awakening, this “conversion process”? (15)

Thus, Thoreau’s *Journal* is a prototype literary investigation of the relationship between human mind and Literature of Nature for the all nature writers of the contemporary period in America as it was truthfully used to examine nature writing. In the real sense of word, it exemplifies the Thoreau’s fervor for natural world.

There were few proponents of the notion that literature is meant for the exploration of man and nature during 1970s and 1980s but their efforts proved crucial for the formation of the basis of ecocriticism. The change in attitude was witnessed in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. The writers started elaborating on old machine conflicts, over wilderness, necessity in the growth of forest, issues of pollution and prevailed urban blight. The writers who gave impetus
during these years to such issues in their publication were Gary Snyder, Terry Tempest Williams, Barry Lopez and Mary Asutin.

Environmental literary studies began to expand significantly in mid 1980s and early 1990s. The significant attempt is made in this direction by Frederick O. Waage who edited the book entitled *Teaching Environmental Literature: Materials, Methods, Resources* in 1985. Likewise, Alicia Nitecki established *The American Nature writing Newsletter* in 1989 with an intention to publish writing about nature and environment in the form of essays and book reviews. Moreover, some American Universities also in their environmental studies curricula started to prescribe literature courses. The rapid growth was seen in the study of literature and environment during 1990s and at the end of the century.

University of Nevada, Reno, was a first University who gave placement for academic position in literature and environment in 1990 for the first time. Modern Language Association also gave impetus to this enterprise by organizing special session. This session entitled “Ecocriticism: The Greening of Literary Studies” was organized and chaired by Harold Fromm in 1991. Afterwards in the American Literature Association Symposium, Glen Love who chaired the symposium conducted a session called “American Nature Writing: New contexts, New approaches” in 1992. Later on, in 1992 Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) was created at the annual meeting of Western Literature Association and Scott Slovie became the first president of it. In the span of just one-year ASLE could succeed to gain more than 300 hundred followers and its number increased till 1995 over 750. Then ASLE organized its first conference in the same year.
The goal of ASLE is “to promote the exchange of ideas and information pertaining to literature that considers the relationship between human beings and the natural world” (N. D. R. Chandra, Nigamananda Das 12) and to stimulate “new nature writing, traditional and innovative scholarly approaches to environmental literature, and interdisciplinary environmental research” (Glotfelty 1996; xix). Before the foundation of ASLE, ecocriticism was a just platform of meeting for the critics but they began to feel to establish it as theory and became the serious proponent of this theory. For this purpose, they founded ASLE and also started their journal called Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment (ISLE). In the course of time ASLE became the crucial platform for ecocriticism. Now the members of ASLE are exceeded more than 1004 from every corner of the world. The members are interested in the issues of environment and they contribute in the study of it. Since 1992, ASLE has tried to develop this approach through many interdisciplinary and innovative practices such as environmental creative writing, poetry writing, ecocritical scholarship, nature writing, art etc. The journal Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment also incorporates the articles which would develop the environmental literary approach and the attitude of mutual understanding between human and non-human world. The formation of such attitude in the general reading public is done successfully by ASLE and ISLE with its joint venture and it is proved when people are from different parts of world are seeking answers for their curiosity from ISLE in regard of environmental approach to literature. Michael P. Branch explains that

Many scholars ask questions from countries such as Brazil, Sweden, China, Turkey, Finland, India, Poland, Germany, Estonia and Taiwan on “what exactly is an ecocritical
approach? Which texts should I read to support my own green reading? How does ecocriticism interact with other disciplines and with other modes of literary criticism? What are some of the new directions in ecocriticism? (The ISLE Reader xiii)

Through the above statement it becomes clear that ASLE and ISLE have played a crucial role to establish the Ecocriticism as interdisciplinary Literary Theory and to make people curious about this emerging and promising field which offers an intellectual feast in the context of eco-philosophy for the restoration of our ruining planet.

**Contributors to Ecocriticism and their Perspectives:**

The term ‘Ecocriticism’ is well elaborated as several critics across the globe have attempted to theorize it in their discourses. It will be worthwhile to have a brief review of the theoretical deliberations of these critics in order to formulate an eclectic frame of understanding. These critics in their discourses define the critical angel of ecology to analyze the literary enterprises. In the late 19th and 20th century the method of textural analysis gets different perspectives that not only increases the possibility of pragmatic meaning but also reveals certain facts that otherwise may remain covered. For example, the literary critics who call themselves feminist attempt to revisit the text from the point of gender discrimination; the theorist of subaltern analyze the text from the minority point of view; similarly, few theorists try to analyze the text from ecological perspective and therefore categorized as ‘Ecocritic’.

Cheryll Burgess Glotfelty is considered as a founder of ecocriticism in America who became the first American Professor of
Literature and Environment at the University of Nevada, Reno. She has done significant contribution to the field of ecocriticism and ecological nature-writing of American studies. She proposed an opinion that the nature writing should given dignity and value. She presents many conference papers and organized conferences for the initial development of ecocriticism. At the conference of Western Literature Association, she urges to adopt the term ecocriticism to refer to disperse critical field known as nature writing and which gave it a wide currency. She started journals in which she could make authors to contribute the field of nature writing. She published a seminal work *The Ecocriticism Reader* in 1996 along with Harold Fromm which proved a milestone in the formation and establishment of ecocriticism as a critical approach to literature. She pointed out through her writing the subtle relationship between literature and nature. She is the one who has proved the potential of ecocriticism as political mode of analysis by making analogous comparison with the established literary theory.

In the introductory chapter of *The Ecocritical Reader*, Glotfelty proposes a typology of ecocriticism by placing the development of it in three different phases. According to her these phases are similar to the growth of feminist literary criticism. In the first phase of development ecocriticism was dealing with images of nature reflected in the canonical literature. The second phase was engaged with the retrieval of neglected and celebrated writers in field of nature writing. The third phase was considered more mature and well established enough to deal with the exploration of various theories related with gender and social constructions in the discourse of literature. Michael J. Mcdowell had extended it and identified the forth phase of its development which he names as Bakhtinian Practical criticism. According to him, this phase
focuses on the practical application of theoretical concepts of ecocriticism to specific literary works.

Harold Fromm is another ecocritic whose contribution and perspectives shape the movement of ecocriticism as a recognized mode of literary criticism in literary discourse. He has co-edited the book entitled *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* with Glotfelty which proved influential book in the history of the ecocriticism. According to him, we are the integral part of our physical world. Our surroundings inspire our power of creativity. The natural influences determine our idea of self and free will. He is seen interested form the very beginning to explore the relationship between human and nature. He points out that it is impossible to be separated from nature and our perception of separation from nature is an illusion. His exploration in the connection of literary ecocriticism depends on evolutionary psychology, consciousness studies and ecology.

His other book *The Nature of Being Human* is an account of his personalized ecocritical discourse which includes a series of informative, articulate and persuasive essays. This book is an attempt to unfold the intimate relationship between human consciousness and natural environment. This book is a modest attempt to illustrate the interrelationships between nature and human life. In this book Fromm argued that it is the belief of some people which is totally wrong that the environmental problems are unnecessarily attached with the important concerns of human life and ruthless use of natural resources does not make any hazardous effect on natural environment. He is of the opinion that environmental problems must be seen seriously as a central philosophic and ontological question of contemporary human existence. He explains further how the human perspective towards nature is
arrogant, shocking and how his disregard of its roots in the earth is suicidal.

Lawrence Buell is one more influential critic and significant contributors as far as discourse of ecocriticism is concerned. He is the author of several books and articles which become crucial for the expansion of the term ecocriticism. The books which are in his credits are *Literary Transcendentalism* (1973), *New England Literary Culture* (1986), *The Environmental imagination: Thoreau, Nature writing, and The Formation of American Culture* (1995), *Emerson* (2003), *The Future of Environmental Criticism* (2005), *Writing for an Endangered World: Literature, Culture and environment in the United States and Beyond* (2001). Lawrence Buell has explored American pastoral experience in different ways and in different context such as social, political, gender-based, aesthetic, pragmatic, and environmental to contribute in the significant survey of pastoralism in the discourse of literature and criticism in America. He intends to draw attention towards the emerging threat of ecological holocaust and suggests that this environmental pressure is fortifying the importance of pastoralism as literary and cultural force. He argues that Arts and Humanities have to make contribution in order understand and face the various environmental challenges emerging in the world.

Crisis of imagination is the direct result of environmental crisis and it is necessary to find out new ways to understand the relationship between nature and humanity. In his book *The Environmental Imagination*, he has tried to find new paths for understanding human and his relation to its surroundings. He has investigated the environmental writing and made an attempt to give new vision to environmental writing. He intends to search for new ways to visualize the relationship between
human imagination and present condition of environment in the contemporary industrialized world. In this book, he has given distinctive environmental perception and new vision for the writing of Thoreau in order to contemplate on the discourse of environmental literature. As *The Environmental Imagination* focuses on American writing in the context of its green tradition, likewise *Writing for and Endangered World* unfolds the work of environmental criticism which addresses the urban landscape in the context of transnational literature. It surveys a diverse range of 19th and 20th century writers from English and American origin to put an end of narrow conception of environmental criticism and its association with whiteness. His most recent book *The Future of Environmental Criticism* published in 2005 refers to his earlier books and points out the development of environmental criticism from an emergent field into an acknowledge and well-established field of research which has now its global influence.

Glen A. Love is also considered as a leader in the development of ecocritical approach to literature. Glen is of the opinion that nature-oriented literature is necessary of time as it offers a concern for nonhuman life and suggest that one should be eco-conscious rather than ego-conscious. In his seminal essay “Revaluing Nature: Toward an Ecological Criticism” he has referred an English historian, Arnold Toynbee who wrote narrative history of the world in *Mankind and Mother Earth* and points out how the health of our planet is being destroyed by human action. He has listed the emerging threats like nuclear holocaust, radiation, chemical or germ warfare, growth of population which may destroy the human existence from the earth and suggests that prompt and powerful immediate action should be taken to save earth. Love considers that in the last thirty years literary scholars and
society as whole have been facing the three crises civil rights, women struggle for liberation and environmental dilapidation. Literary writings and other discourses with full force have already preoccupied with the prevailing issues except environment. By taking into consideration the crucial importance of nature in our life, we must take step ahead to protect environment and should not be depend on the limited past problem-solving strategies. He also suggests that the issue of environmental crises should occupy prominent place in English literature.

His book, *Practical Ecocriticism: Literature, Biology, and the Environment* (2003), investigates the relation between human nature and ecocriticism and it also explains how the ecocriticism as critical approach is distinctive as compare to other approaches. He says that “Ecocriticism, unlike all other forms of literary inquiry, encompasses non-human as well as human contexts and considerations. On this claim, ecocriticism bases its challenge to much postmodern critical discourse as well as to the critical systems of the past (3).” He points out that most of the world literature focus on relation of non-human world with human and its pastoralist fervor. While explaining the scope and vision of ecocriticism, he says that

What is emerging is a multiplicity of approaches and subjects, including-under the big tent of environmental literature – nature writing, deep ecology, the ecology of cities, ecofeminism, the literature of toxicity, environmental justice, bioregionalism, the lives of animals, the revaluation of place, interdisciplinarity, eco-theory, the expansion of the canon to include previously unheard voices, and the reinterpretation of canonical works from the past (5)
He tries to cover the interest areas of investigation of ecocriticism and eco-critics which broaden the scope of ecocriticism as a literary theory that analyzes and interprets the heard and unheard voices in the discourses of various disciplines.

During 1970s, relationship between literature and environment became the focal point of discussion in the writings of scholars and writers. Joseph Meeker also was also one of those writers whose focus of interest is environment and literature. He regards that literature production is an important characteristic of human creature. He is of the opinion that being human product, it influences the human behavior and it also helps to shape human attitude towards nature. According to him, literature develop an insight in human beings in regard of his behavior with other species of the earth and with the world around him. Hence, literature helps for the welfare and survival of mankind. Joseph Meeker in his work *The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology* (1974) argues that:

Human beings are the earth’s only literary creatures… If the creation of literature is an important characteristic of the human species, it should be examined carefully and honestly to discover its influence upon human behaviour and the natural environment-to determine what role if any it plays in the welfare and survival of mankind and what insight it offers into human relationships with other species and with the world around us. Is it an activity which adapts us better to the world or one which estranges us from it? From the unforgiving perspective of evolution and natural selection, does literature contribute more to our survival than it does to our extinction?” (The Comedy of Survival, P. 3-4)
He asserts that being only literary creature of earth, it is responsibility of human beings to find out the role of literature in the welfare and survival of mankind as well the environment. He seems to be insisting to the readers and scholars to contemplate on all facets of literature so that we can draw the specific lesson which throws light on the philosophy of peaceful, civilized, humanitarian life.

Meeker has also attempted to re-interpret the modes of literature that is tragedy and comedy from ecological perspective. According to him comedy as a literary mode of literature encourages values of healthy relationship and values of survival while tragedy through its morbid presentation of life promotes negative values such as, destruction, decay and non-existence. He praises the writing of those authors which celebrate nature and strong human sensibility for environment.

Jonathan Bate is one more contributor who has made a significant contribution to popularize the environmental approach to literature. Through the publication of his book entitled Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition, he has introduced new trend in the literary criticism. He proposed an opinion that the prime aim of the book is to recall of what Wordsworth did in the nineteenth century. He names this recapturing the book as “a manifesto for a new ecological criticism.” He criticizes the idealist reading of Romanticism in 1960s and post –Althusserian Marxist critique as these readings are based on false assumption. The idealist reading of Romanticism considers human mind is superior to nature and Marxism emphasizes that the human economy is much more important than the economy of nature (9). Most of the contemporary critics have followed the vein of Bate’s view and became involved in the activity of politicizing Romanticism by adopting the views of green rather than red. They have supported the claim that
pastoral is an important traditional literary mode which bears the politics of our relationship to nature.

Carolyn Merchant is an American eco-feminist philosopher who is specially famous for her theory in her book *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology, and the Scientific Revolution* (1980). Merchant explains that before enlightenment, nature was considered as a mother and life giver of all things but gradually this metaphor is being replaced by Scientific Revolution as it starts to analyze wild nature with rational and adopt dominion policy as human comes to know the all secrets of mother earth. As a result of it, human becomes confident and mother earth becomes an object which is able to be controlled. According to Merchant, this intention and metaphor to consider earth as ‘nature unveiled’ is still observed frequently in the scientific language. Merchant has associated this changed metaphor of earth with the identity of female and she sees nature and female representing two faces of same metaphor as controllable object. She writes,

The female earth was central to organic cosmology that was undermined by the Scientific Revolution and the rise of a market-oriented culture...for sixteenth-century Europeans the root metaphor binding together the self, society and the cosmos was that of an organism...organismic theory emphasized interdependence among the parts of the human body, subordination of individual to communal purposes in family, community, and state, and vital life permeate the cosmos to the lowliest stone.” (Merchant, The Death of Nature, 1980: 278)
She is deliberately seen referring earth as female earth to show how female and earth gradually became the objects of periphery instead of its importance as center due to Scientific Revolution. In her another book *Ecological Revolutions: Nature, Gender and Science in New England*, she proposed her views on the relationship of human beings and nature. She points out that in the past people used to relate their life with the land and this way of life may inspire for renewing resources and establishing sustainability of existence in the future. These past ways of relating to land will play an important role to establish it as a human ethics which would in turn develop a bond between nature and human in the age of globalization, privatization and consequential environmental crisis.

William Rueckert has written a very significant critical essay entitled “Literature and Ecology” in which he explains the aim of ecocriticism is to apply ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature. He believes that ecocriticism is relevant to our present and future life of the earth. Eco-critics try to establish eco-poetics by using ecological concepts to the reading, teaching and writing about literature. Ecological study of literature encourages human beings to think positively about the natural world around him instead of destroying it. Ecologist exemplifies how the human indifferent attitude towards nature is self-destructive and this reflection is found being projected in the works of literature. Eco-critics are seen exploring the possibility in the works of art for the cooperative coexistence of non-human and human beings in the biosphere.

William Rueckert argues that the poem is such mode of literature which offers energy to form the pathways for continuing the life cycle. According to him, poem is a form of stored energy and practice of this form through reading and teaching liberates the flow of energy which
helps to develop kind attitude in human beings for the natural world. He further explores that the creative imagination is the producing source of the energy which we perceive in the modes of literature and the energy we perceive in the poem is infinite that can be used as a source of energy again and again. William Rueckert also suggests for developing the teaching methods of literature that would help to encourage the attitude of preservation of health of the biosphere.

David Mazel is one more proponent of ecocriticism who in his essay, “American Literary Environmentalism as Domestic Orientalism” discusses the problems of heterogeneity in literature. He also points out how ecocriticism as an approach is connected with environmental literature and environmental politics. He, instead of considering literature heterogeneity and interrelations among ecocriticism, ecological literature and environmental politics as problematic, believes that they are rather ingredients of environment and play crucial role for survival of society. There are various modes for exercising power and environmentalism is one of them. He argues that American domestic orientalism exists in the form of American literary environmentalism. He further extends that emerging political environmentalism with their beliefs, thoughts, and ideas are not entirely new system rather they are modified versions of earlier structures of political, cultural, economic and knowledge system. He exemplifies his argument by referring the science fiction and argues that like other fiction, science fiction also portrays world around it and gives insight into people’s actions and feelings. This type of fiction also like other fiction throws light on the relationship between people and the environment around them.
Thus, the analysis of the definitions and opinions of these critics who have significantly contributed to the discourse will help to build a solid ground for the subsequent analysis of the text.

**Literary Ecology and Ecocriticism:**

In the period of “Paris Agreement” or in the period when the world leaders were keen about GDP and carbon emission, it can be seen that the people associated with every field are showing their concern about the environmental issues. The novels written under the label of Science Fiction, or even the Cartoon movies for children like *Finding Nemo* or *WALL-E*.

In the recent periods of time, Man becomes aware of his continuous assault on the natural world and consequential degradation of his planet. So, people around the world are seen taking corrective action in order to prevent the decay and degradation of our mother earth. Scholars from all over the world are trying to explain the problems of environmental degradation in their respective disciplines. For example, the discipline of psychology is trying to find out the connection between environmental condition and mental health. Some psychologists believe that social and psychological illness of modern man is the direct outcome of his estrangement from nature. Likewise, the field of Philosophy is discussing the topics like Deep Ecology, Ecofeminism, Environmental Ethics, and Social Ecology. Literary study is also like other disciplines dealing with the frightening environmental issues by portraying it in the action of its mode. Hubert Zapf (bio) in his essay, “Literary Ecology and the Ethics of Texts” argues that ecological process of evolution and cultural process of evolution are having many similarities as they are always interdependent. Therefore, he addresses it as “cultural
ecosystem”. He says that “various sections and subsystems of society are described as “cultural ecosystems”. This also applies to the cultural ecosystems of art and of literature. He further argues that how literature as part of cultural ecosystem always portrays the non-human world while dealing with human subject. He explains how literature and ecology continuously interconnected from the very beginning but now it is necessity of time for literature to be the conspicuous advocate of ecology as the modern world becomes materialistic, depersonalized and money minded. He says

Human beings are, as it were, by their very nature not only instinctual but also cultural beings. Literature and other forms of cultural imagination and cultural creativity are necessary in this view to restore continually the richness, diversity, and complexity of those inner landscapes of the mind, the imagination, the emotions, and interpersonal communication that make up the cultural ecosystems of modern humans, but are threatened by impoverishment from an increasingly over economized, standardized, and depersonalized contemporary world. (852)

In his book entitled *Animals and Modern Cultures: A Sociology of Human-Animal Relations in Modernity*, Franklin argues about the place of human beings in the universe. He proposes that the emerging disciplines like natural history, biological sciences, astronomy and geology have challenged hither to accepted theological anthropocentricism for human supremacy. These emerging fields are creating knowledgeable human who “could see that the world was not oriented towards humans and they were just one small cog in a very large, centerless system” (12). N. D. R. Chandra, Nigamananda Das in their
book *Ecology, Myth, and Mystery* have also explored about the relationship between human and nature with reference to historians. While explaining reciprocal relationships between humans and land and literary ecology as a study area of ecocriticism, they write

Worster and other historians are writing environmental histories, the reciprocal relationship between human and land, considering nature not just as the stage upon which the human story is acted out but as an actor in the drama…it [Ecocriticism] is an application of ecology into literature that aims to study the direct bases of human life, organism and non-living things where everything is related to everything. (16)

In the mid-eighties the field of environmental literary studies is inaugurated and it was getting flourished in the nineties with rapid speed. As we know Literary theory generally in their procedure analyses and interprets the relationship between writer, text and the world around. So far, the ecocriticism is concerned as a literary theory, the term ‘Literary Ecology’ was first introduced by Joseph Meeker in his book *Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology* to denote “the study of biological themes and relationships which appear in literary works. It is simultaneously an attempt to discover what roles have been played by literature in the ecology of the human species” (9).

The literature which presents a model of relationship between man and nature is nothing but presenting the literary ecology and the role of Eco-critics is to interpret ecological consciousness of writer and his work. As a result, such study certainly influences perception of man towards nature and his behavior to it. As, it is rightly pointed out by Glen A. Love...
in “Revaluing Nature” that “The most important function of literature today is to redirect human consciousness to full consideration of its place in a threatened natural world” (237). The danger of catastrophe posed on humanity due to his over use of natural resources has recently caught the attention of writers. Therefore, most of the writers are seen giving due importance for the projection of ecology in their literatures.

**Attributes of Green Literature:**

**Ecological Decay and Literary Imagination:**

It can be observed that the literary imagination has been getting sparks from the social, political, cultural and natural events of the period. The feeling of fear about the vast sky on the head and the dark caves underneath have been remained a matter of great curiosity and fear in mankind. This curiosity either quenched after the assumption of the Almighty or declared as taboo by accepting the supernatural. This feeling of curiosity and fear was reflected in the theological sermons and wild literary imaginations. The great German philosopher Immanuel Kant also comments in this regard that “Two things fill my mind with ever-increasing wonder and awe, the more often and the more intensely the reflection dwells on them: the starry heavens above me and the moral law within me.” In this quotation two terminologies are very significant one “starry heavens” and “moral law” one stands as a metaphor of such long lived curiosity about the sky and second reflects the salutation for the spiritual revival. These reflections of end from the theological discourses of the world influence the creative minds of the period. The metaphors used in the literature, the storyline depicted in the novels and delineation of the characters can be analyzed in order to understand the influence of this deeply rooted fear of the ‘end’ depicted in the theological or more
specifically mythological discourses like – end of millennium and day of judgment myth in Christianity; Maya civilization’s myth of end of time as their Mesoamerican calendar stops counting after 2012; Hindu cosmology’s concept of Mahapralaya (Great Dissolution). The analysis of these events depicted in these theological discourses can be analyzed from the ecological perspective as they also indicate the major reason behind the destruction is the unethical nature of mankind. This influence of religious conception of annihilation transformed its nature in the modern human discourse of science and technology but the reason behind it remains the same. The end depicted in the modern apocalyptic literature is not a nature but a man and his unending desire to dominate in the physical habitation.

This fear of end, furthermore, gets different kinds of serotypes across the period, for example – few of the authors depict the end of the world due to a kind of epidemic; few reflect the end due to totalitarian government; few very interestingly picturized the end due to natural disasters; few reveals how a scientific experiment went wrong and kills humanity; few held the human intrigue in natural cycles as one of the reasons for the end; few are under the influence of nuclear annihilation; and few systematically reflect that how resource depletion will lead the world towards its devastating end. Further, it also gets certain modern forms like extraterrestrial attack, cybernetic revolt, technological singularity or dysgenics.

The novels that reflect the war uses the huge warfare machineries that destroys the humanity from the world. The devastating physical and psychological effects of nuclear bombing was reflected in these novels that are appears more realistic as they use the real scientific logic while depicting it. In most of these war novels the world is pushed towards the
cliff of annihilation and the humanity appears to be a self-destructive. Therefore, these war novels can be grouped under a specific stereotype that uses in common a kind of metaphors of modern warfare technology, the reflection of destructed landscaping, fatally injured characters and inadequate ration.

The novels which have considered an epidemic as center of destruction of the world uses two kinds of stereotypes – one in which the naturally epidemic hits one locality and unstoppably spread all over the world, however in second kind of drug is invented in the laboratory and its side effect brings the fatal disease into the world. These novels also follow a kind of similarity in the depiction of the end while exploring the frightening landscapes with the minute details of dying humans, for example in most of the novels and Hollywood movies used a metaphor of ‘mass grave’ to generate a horrifying end. Most of the time these natural epidemics were unexpectedly hits back from history, however on few occasions the new disease was evolved due to certain human made chemical reactions. Similar to all other stereotypes of the apocalypse, in this type of novel the authors were juxtaposes dual realities one is physical and second is psychological. The form becomes very popular when the authors start depicting the undead zombies and theory becomes apparent that the world will end “not with a bang but with a bite”. The Hollywood produced a series of block blaster movies with this theme. On the other hand, the authors also reflect that the unauthorized drugs and the disastrous consequences.

Thus, it can be observed that as the devoid between nature and culture gradually widened in the present period, it also generates a threat in the mind of modern man regarding to the end of the world. The primary reading of J. G. Ballard’s novels also suggests that this threat of
natural disaster is overpowering in his imagination as he depicted the natural imbalance as the major reasons behind the apocalyptic world he has imagined.

**Ecological Symbolism and Pictography of Literature:**

The literature that can be easily characterized under the umbrella term like eco-literature carries certain common features especially in the rendering of thematic concerns of eco-conscious author. The eco-literature is not just a story happening in the lives of the characters but it is in fact a creation of simulacrum of the cosmos. Though, this new imagined cosmos has certain similarities with the factual world, they also carry a striking phenomenon that helps the narrator to maintain the distance from the reality and extent its wonder to the readers. As these eco-conscious authors were on mission to create an alternate universe, they require a huge number of symbols.

The ecological symbolism dates back in the history of anthropology and can be evidenced in the rock art from the archaeological sites across the world. In this pre-historic art, the nature can be seen as a motivational source. These ancient paintings depict the harmonious co-existence of man and the nature. This symbolic representation of the nature is further depicted in the Greek Literature in which the nature still remained one of the important sources of symbols. Mark Payne in his article, ‘The Natural World in Greek Literature and Philosophy’ rightly comments how the nature is not only an insignificant backdrop for the grand events happening in the lives of the human characters, but the nature is also an active participant as a symbol that has a potential to transmit the message that is even impossible through the words. He writes –
While it is surely true that “it is not for his landscapes that Homer is read,” his landscapes are not merely a setting for a human story that might just as well be happening elsewhere. Homer’s juxtapositions of battlefield action with similes involving description of the natural world often produce an uncanny Nature that blurs the distinction between the human and the nonhuman. When Homer compares the sounds of the battlefield—the clash of metal weapons, the cries of victors and vanquished—to winter streams meeting in a valley that a shepherd hears from afar (4.452–456), the comparison suggests that human beings impute agency to sensory impressions of an extreme or unusual kind in the act of sensing itself, whether or not they would otherwise think of what produced these impressions as an agent: Mountain streams and battles suspend customary distinctions between subject and object in the act of perception.

This kind of natural symbolism further can be observed in the Romantic poetry, in which the authors use nature as symbols to express feelings. The motif of these symbols is to provide a simulated physical experience through the words. For instance when William Wordsworth writes in his poem *Daffodils*, “I wandered lonely as a cloud/ That floats on high o’er vales and hills,/ When all at once I saw a crowd,/ A host, of golden daffodils” or P. B. Shelley in his poem *Dark Spirit of the Desart Rude* writes “Dark Spirit of the desart rude / That o’er this awful solitude,/ Each tangled and untrodden wood, Each dark and silent glen below, / Where sunlight’s gleamings never glow,” they give the physical experience to the readers.
The use of natural symbols by the cave painters, ancient Greek poets and comparatively recent Romantic poets might be having different motifs but they are following the same characteristic features. For example, William Blake’s expression, “Tyger Tyger, burning bright, / In the forests of the night; /What immortal hand or eye, /Could frame thy fearful symmetry?” is similar to the painting of an anonymous cave painter of Bhimbetka rock shelters (Raisen District, Madhya Pradesh, India) depicting “a man” being hunted by a beast, a horned boar. These examples of ecological symbolism highlight the significant place of the nature in human life and subsequently in literary imagination.

However, after the industrial revolution and spread of scientific knowledge, the literary representation of ecological issues is depicted by using the negative and deceased symbols, in order to emphasize the man-made imbalance in natural cycles. The symbolic representation of ecology has been shifted from mere glorification to didacticism, as most of the authors attempt to transmit a message to the real world by holding mirror with the capacity of reflecting the distinct future. The pictographic characteristic feature of the narration is achieved by using the concrete ecological imagery that not only helps the authors to create an alternative universe, but to depict the altered realities.

Scarcity of water and the cracked earth; global warming and water filled coastal areas; extreme heat and rapid deserization; alarming increase in water, earth and air pollution and dysfunctional natural cycles; never ending rain and unstoppable hurricanes; extreme mining and volcano eruptions; earthquake and tsunamis; endangered species and deceased civilians; and destructed social systems are few of the major ecological symbols and situations that are frequently used by the contemporary authors. These symbols are different than the previously
used ecological symbols as they were not intended to glorify the nature or to metaphorize the human feelings but to contribute in making of new post-apocalyptic world. These ecological symbols were not the creations of the man’s love for nature but they are the products of the deeply rooted threat of annihilation. A historical review of the ecological symbols apparently reveals that the nature symbolism used previously in the Greek literature of romantic poetry is positive and optimistic but on the contrary the symbols used in the genre of green literature is most of the times negative and nihilistic in nature.

**Ecological Destruction and literature of socio-political apocalypse:**

Another significant feature that can be generalized with the ample empirical evidences is that the ecological literature of the modern period, especially of the contemporaries of J G Ballard, can be treated as the literature of socio-political apocalypse. It can be seen that the opposition between nature and culture has been remained one of the frequently debated topics of the academics across the time. Few of the theorists from sociology and anthropology have considered culture as a binary opposite term to nature. However, few of the theorists also rely on the harmonious co-existence of both. In literature this nature culture relations get the dual kind of representation as few authors celebrates the nature and her role in the human life, whereas few of them also depict nature as one of the enemies of mankind.

In the modern ecological literature, this devoid between nature and culture is widened to such an extended that they appear as the destructive entities of each other. In most of the ecological novels in which the authors have depicted the natural disaster or post-apocalyptic world the social systems were also collapsed, living behind the man with only his
innate ability to survive. In these novels it can be observed that the electricity, water supply, public transport services, medical services which were once build to help man in to the critical situations, are now dysfunctional as they have not considered such a devastative situation. This failure of social services is deliberately highlighted to break down the superiority complex of the modern man. This depiction of collapse emphasizes that nature is always supreme and ignore of her balance by the arrogant civilization is a self-destructive. It is observed that the people were trapped in their own houses or offices due to the failure of public or personal transport systems; roads were jammed with unmoving traffic; they could not communicate with each other as the communication system is dysfunctional; people were facing the scarcity of drinking water and food as their supplies were stopped; the crimes were increased and people were not feeling safe as the crime preventive systems were not working; they could not get the medical aid.

The characters in those ecologically destructed society were not a man bond with the laws of civilization, but is just an animal reacting to the unfriendly nature with his natural instincts. Such kind of characterization is in fact a basic standpoint of these authors who want to reflect a ‘new world’ in which the man is no more in the role of a master.

**Aftermaths of Ecological collapse and Pursuit of Environmentalist:**

The depiction of ‘aftermaths’ of ecological collapse is also one of the significant markers of the ecological literature. It is observed that most of the authors by depicting the post-apocalyptic world, highlights the graveness of today’s environmental problems. In these novels authors uses photographic narrative technique through which he explores the minute details of the apocalyptic or post- apocalyptic world. Every
minute details, while strictly observing the scientific coherence, is explored along with the psychological upheavals and human reactions. It is shown with the great care that how the man-made world is destroyed due to a single natural calamity.

Pat Wheeler in his article ‘Another Generation Cometh’: Apocalyptic Endings and New Beginnings in Science Fictional New London(s),’ while speaking about the apocalyptic tendencies of the contemporary literature comments that –

Writers of science fiction take their discussions of the future in any number of directions, sometimes going beyond any human or given knowledge in their speculations. However, in apocalyptic science fiction, even in the most fantastical speculations, there is something of an ontological certainty, in the sense that the dread certainty of disaster and calamity are recognized as part of the very nature of human existence. In more recent times science fiction has tended to move more towards dystopia and uncertain futures that invite us to respond to the brave new worlds created out of the white heat of technological and scientific advances, and the effects this may have on the plane. (58)

Wheeler’s opinion can be testified with several textual examples from the science fiction. In these post-apocalyptic novels, authors use natural or man-made reasons that destroys the old system and creates a possibility of new establishments with new rules which are more eco-friendly. Therefore, these novels can be read as a Pursuit of Environmentalist.
Thus, the theory of ecocriticism helps to understand the recurrent tendencies of Green Literature. The opinions of eco-critics in the context of different texts are considered here in order to have an eclectic model of ecocritical methodology. The theory is used extensively in the textual analysis of the present thesis that not only helped to support the central argument of the thesis but have also formulated a solid ground of the theory of ecocriticism with the essential reading list.