INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this research project is to attempt an ecocritical analysis of the short stories of Hemingway. Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) is one of the greatest writers of the twentieth century. He entered the field of serious fiction through the writing of short stories.

Hemingway volunteered for service in World War I in 1918. He was appointed as an ambulance driver and was severely wounded in the war. Scarred physically and emotionally from the war and stifled by his home environment, Hemingway began a quest for psychological and artistic freedom that led him first to the secluded woods of Northern Michigan, where he had spent his most pleasant childhood years. Returning to America after the war, he wrote short stories. The main focus of his stories was on external detail and the physical environment.

The present study has been carried out with the main objective of exploring how far an ecocritical perspective illuminates the short stories of Hemingway. Ecocriticism has captured the attention of many scholars over the last three decades. Ecocriticism by and large is concerned with the relationship between humans and the landscape. Early theories in literary studies focus on issues of class, race, gender, region as important criteria of critical analysis. The late twentieth century has woken up to a new threat: ecological disaster. Ecocriticism is the result of this new consciousness, that very soon, there will be nothing beautiful in nature to discourse about, unless we are careful.
Ecocriticism is not a unitary theory. Different strands of ecocriticism proliferate into various sub-fields of eco-conscious studies. Ecocriticism expands the notion of the world to include the entire ecosphere. Though ecocritical writings speak of nature, all nature writing works are not ecocritical. The presence of a bond between the human and the non-human generally forms the ecocritical basis of a text. Ecocriticism pleads for a better understanding of nature, and it both interprets and represents the natural world. It seeks to protect the ecological rights of nature.

The present study attempts to provide a broader perspective of Hemingway’s short stories by adding an ecological dimension to it. Ecocriticism has provided us with different insights into Hemingway’s short stories. Nature exists as a background setting in most of the stories of Hemingway. Random studies of Hemingway’s stories from an ecocritical standpoint do exist. However, no comprehensive study such as the present one has not been carried out so far.

In the stories, human and biological environments are shown mutually interdependent. Irrespective of the ecological devastation, Hemingway’s protagonists turn to nature to escape from the trauma of war and to seek solace.

Ernest Hemingway wrote a total of sixty three short stories. Forty-nine of these stories published with the title The First Forty Nine Stories (1939) have been considered for the present study. Out of the forty-nine stories, twenty-two stories have been found exhibiting ecological concerns in some form or the other. The ecocritical concerns of Hemingway can broadly be classified under the heads deep ecology, ecofeminism, ecosphere, oikopoetics and ecocide.
The first chapter **Ecocriticism** gives a detailed introduction to ecotheory from its origin to the present. It also examines how ecocriticism differs from other critical approaches. The relationship between nature and culture, gradual growth of ecocriticism and its related concepts are also described in this chapter.

The second chapter **Ecocriticism and Hemingway** describes the importance of studying Hemingway’s short stories from an ecocritical point of view. This is because his literary relationship with the natural world is obvious in the short stories. Hemingway spent much of his childhood learning about nature, and this has helped him to learn about living in the wilderness. Most of the short stories have autobiographical element about them. Place, especially Michigan continued to inspire Hemingway throughout his writing career because nature continued to be a major theme in many of his works.

The third chapter **Deep Ecology** attempts to analyze the following stories from the viewpoint of deep ecology.

1. *Old Man at the Bridge*
2. *Now I Lay Me*
3. *Cat in the Rain*
4. *A Canary for One*
5. *The Three Day Blow*

This chapter focuses on the environmental crisis and the need for humans to live in harmony with nature. Five stories discussed here exhibit the principle idea of deep ecology that “all living beings have an intrinsic value.” The stories reveal the interdependence of nature and humans.
The fourth chapter **Ecofeminism** examines the following stories from an ecofeministic angle.

1. *The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife*
2. *Cat in the Rain*
3. *Mr. Elliot and Mrs. Elliot*
4. *Up in Michigan*
5. *The End of Something*
6. *Hills Like White Elephants*
7. *A Very Short Story*
8. *Indian Camp*
9. *Mother of a Queen*

The stories discussed here focus on the parallel destruction of nature and women in a patriarchal society. While the women characters are able to associate themselves with nature, the male characters are insensitive to both women and nature. So nature and women are considered inferior by men. Both undergo parallel suffering in the hands of man. All the stories represent the ecofeminist dimensions of masculinist violence against women and nature at various levels.

The fifth chapter, **Ecosphere** analyses the importance of place and its influence on the protagonist in the following stories.

1. *The Snows of Kilimanjaro*
2. *The Cross-Country Snow*
3. *Indian Camp*
4. *A Clean Well-Lighted Place*
5. *Soldier’s Home*
This chapter focuses on the concept of establishing citizenship in both the natural and social worlds. The stories studied here reveal the ecological wisdom obtained by the characters through their association with a particular place.

The sixth chapter, Oikopoetics attempts to study the dwelling of man in nature. Oikos represents the nexus among the human, the nature and the spirit. The two stories selected for the study here are:

1. Big Two-Hearted River Part-I
2. Big Two-Hearted River Part-II

Both the stories exhibit Hemingway’s relationship with the natural world. Nick Adams, the protagonist, undertakes a journey into the burnt landscape. His journey is both physical and spiritual. Through an oikopoetic reading of Nick’s close association with the landscape, we can understand the important role nature plays in the spiritual development of an individual.

Ecocide forms the major concern of ecocriticism. Hence the seventh chapter, Ecocide discusses the ecological destruction caused by the human world to nature and human beings alike in the following stories:

1. The End of Something
2. Big Two-Hearted River Part-I
3. A Natural History of the Dead
4. A Way You’ll Never Be
5. On the Quai at Smyrna

All the stories demonstrate the extent of environmental damage caused to the earth on account of the war. War destroys not only people but also the physical environment. These stories show the huge damage caused to nature and human beings alike.
All these twenty two stories examined in the present study reveal man’s place in the biosphere. The study holds the view that several decades before the advent of the school of ecocriticism, Hemingway’s short stories have spoken for his eco-consciousness. The study concludes on the note that there is a need to preserve nature as humans are primarily members of the natural world.

The study holds that Hemingway’s ecoconsciousness, as it emerges from the short stories examined here, foreshadows the emergence of the contemporary ecocritical theory. That Hemingway was an unabashed hunter, bull fighter and sport fisherman runs contrary to his conservationist attitude to nature which emerges through most of his stories. Thus the study also points out the paradox in Hemingway’s attitude to nature. He appears, strangely, both a lover of and also a threat to nature. The thesis concludes with a summary of the study carried out with suggestions for further research.
This chapter attempts a brief survey of the origins of Ecocriticism and its definitions. It also examines how ecocriticism differs from the other critical approaches, and examines the difference between ‘green studies’ and ‘nature studies.’ The chapter further discusses the relationship between nature and culture, analyses the growth of ecocriticism and the concepts related to it. The study also explores ecological concerns in Hemingway’s short stories. Finally, the main focus of this research is to identify the short stories of Hemingway with ecological concerns and analyse them under different sub-fields of ecocriticism.

Ecocriticism plays a prominent role in the study of human association with nature. In the last three decades, ecocriticism has captured the attention of scholars and has proved itself to be an interesting field of investigation in literature. It is necessary for us to know what is ecocriticism and the various sub-fields involved in ecocriticism.

The origin of Ecocriticism and its definition

Ecocriticism emerged as a study of the relationship between literature and the natural environment in the mid-1990’s. Ecocriticism is a term derived from Greek oikos and kritis. "Oikos" means "household," a nexus of humans, nature and the spirit. "Kritis" means judge, "the arbiter of taste who wants the house kept in good order” (Howarth 1988: 163) in all regards.

This being a new field, different thinkers and critics have used the approach and mode variously, and, accordingly, defined the term “ecocriticism” in different ways. However, their basic concerns being similar, the various approaches generally focus on the relationship between man and the earth. Ecocriticism is the study of literature and environment from an interdisciplinary point of view where all sciences come together to analyse the environment and arrive at possible solutions for the correction of the contemporary environmental situation.
With its interdisciplinary nature, ecocriticism forms a strange interface between the sciences and the humanities. Ecocriticism was officially heralded by the publication of two seminal works written in the 1990’s, *The Ecocriticism Reader* (1996) by Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm and *The Environmental Imagination* (1995) by Lawrence Buell. Cheryll Glotfelty is the acknowledged founder of Ecocritics in the United States of America. As a pioneer in this field, she says:

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-centred approach to literary studies (1996: xviii).

Glotfelty asks questions such as how is nature represented in literature; how has the concept of wilderness changed over time and how is science itself open to literary analysis. Ecocriticism is apparently a more political mode of analysis, when compared to Femininism and Marxism. Ecocritics generally tie their cultural analyses explicitly to a ‘green’ moral and political agenda. In this respect, ecocriticism is closely related to environmentally-oriented developments in philosophy and political theory.

Cheryll Burgess Glotfelty became the first American Professor of Literature and Environment at the University of Nevada, Reno. Glotfelty’s substantial influence on the ecological nature-writing wing of American studies through her many conference papers and networking activities has touched a large number of other people as well. She points out that in our postmodern age the profession of English
Literature must “redraw the boundaries” to “remap” the rapidly changing contours of literary studies. The global environmental crisis is apparently ignored by scholars. Until very recently there has been no sign that the institution of literary studies has even been aware of the environmental crisis. For instance, there have been no journals, no professional societies and no conferences on literature and environment. Burgess points out that the English profession has failed to respond in any significant way to the issue of the environment, the acknowledgement of our place within the natural world and our need to live heedfully within it, at peril of our very survival (1996: 226).

In a significant and wide-ranging survey of pastoralism in American literature and criticism, Laurence Buell explores the experience of American pastoral in a variety of frames and contexts--social, political, gender-based, aesthetic, pragmatic, and environmental. He pays greater attention to the emergent threat of ecological holocaust, and sees environmental pressures as tending to increase the importance of pastoralism as a literary and cultural force in the future. In his book The Environmental Imagination (1995), Buell says that this study must be "conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis" (12). His work is thus primary to ecocriticism. His ecocritical approach can be seen in his outstanding work on Henry David Thoreau, which interprets Thoreau’s Nature writing and the formation of American culture.

Timothy Morton’s Ecology without Nature: Rethinking Environmental Aesthetics (1998) complements Buell’s work by pursuing the nature of nature in ecocriticism. Morton documents the changing definition of the word ‘nature’ and, echoing Buell to a certain extent, suggests that nature can be anything. Richard Kerridge’s definition in the British Writing the Environment (1998) suggests, like Glotfelty’s broad cultural ecocriticism, that:
The ecocritics want to track environmental ideas and representations wherever they appear, to see more clearly a debate which seems to be taking place, often part-concealed, in a great many cultural spaces. Most of all ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis (5).

The domain of ecocriticism is very broad because it is not limited to any literary genre. Apart from Lawrence Buell, Cheryll Glotfelty and William Howarth, Simon C. Estok, William Rueckert, Suellen Campbell, Michael P. Branch and Glen A. Love, are equally committed to ecocritical pursuit.

Glen A. Love, a leader in the development of ecocriticism, has been teaching and writing for years with the intent of bringing communication between the natural sciences and the humanities closer together. What does human nature have to do with ecocriticism? This is the question at the heart of Glen Love’s book *Practical Ecocriticism* (2003). In the introduction he says:

At the beginning of the third millennium and of a new century often heralded as “the century of the environment,” a coherent and broadly based movement embracing literary environmental interconnections, commonly termed “ecocriticism” is emerging …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 begins with the premise that “human behavior is not an empty vessel whose only input will be that provided by culture, but is strongly influenced by genetic orientations that underlie and modify, or are modified by cultural influences” (3).

His Practical Ecocriticism: Literature, Biology, and the Environment (2003) clearly outlines the issues the “two cultures” face together. He points out that a great deal of world literature deals with the pastoral and with the relationship between human and non-human beings. According to him ecocritics are trying to read literature with a fresh sensitivity to the emergent voice of nature. Inevitably this “voice” can only be expressed, in literature at the least, through human representations of non-human creatures and landscapes. He focuses on ecocriticism as a multifarious approach:

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).

Lawrence Buell defines ecocriticism in The Future of Environmental Criticism (2005) as “the environmentally oriented study of literature and (less often) the arts more generally, and to the theories that underlie such critical practice” (138). He identifies two phases of ecocriticism, the “first wave ecocriticism” and the “second wave ecocriticism” or “revisionist ecocriticism.” The first wave ecocritics focused on such genres as “nature writing, nature poetry and wilderness fiction” (138). While the first-wave ecocritics upheld the philosophy of organism, the second wave ecocritics
inclined towards environmental justice issues and a “‘social ecocriticism’ that takes urban and degraded landscapes just as seriously as ‘natural’ landscapes” (Buell 22). Ultimately, Buell acknowledges the fact that western academy focuses on ecocriticism only as “environmental criticism” (Buell 28).

Ecocriticism is concerned with nature writing and ecological themes in all literature. The preservation of nature has always been a prime concern since the Vedic times in India and the early Greek thought. As an academic discipline it began in earnest in the 1990's although its origins go back to the late 1970's, when at the meetings of the Western Literature Association, a body whose field of interest is the literature of the American West, arose the concept of ecocriticism and what ecocriticism signifies. Prior to the emergence of environmental literary studies as an academic field in the late 1980’s, there was no discourse of ecocriticism per se. It appeared as a general discourse of nature writing. The early ecocriticism seems to have been prompted only indirectly by environmentalism itself.

Because it is a new area of study, scholars are still engaged in defining the scope and aims of the subject. As an emerging discipline, ecocriticism still does not have a widely-known set of assumptions, doctrines or procedures.

It is not merely an exercise in analysing nature in literature but a move towards a more biocentric world-view, an extension of ethics, a broadening of mans' concept of global community to include nonhuman life forms and the physical environment. Gary Snyder uses the term "Gift Economy" to bring a fresh perspective to the meaning of ecology. Snyder defines a gift economy as that which saves the world instead of depleting and devouring it. In this context, the role of a writer is of paramount importance: “Art takes nothing from the world: it is a gift and an exchange. It leaves the world nourished” (The Practice of the Wild 1990: 39).
In Greg Garrard’s opinion ecocritics may not be qualified to contribute to debates about "problems in ecology" but “they must nevertheless transgress disciplinary boundaries and develop their own 'ecological literacy' as far as possible” (Ecocriticism 2004: 5). In this book he discusses broadly the extent to which one uses, saves, or ignores the environment. According to him this capacity to “define, explore and even resolve ecological problems in this wider sense,” contributes to the uniqueness of ecocriticism among contemporary literary and cultural theories (6).

David Mazel declares in The Ecocriticism Reader that ecocriticism is the analysis of literature as though nature mattered.

Our reading of environmental literature should help us realize that the concerns are not exclusively of the order of “Shall these trees be cut? or Shall this river be dammed?”-important as such questions are-but also of the order of “What has counted as the environment, and what may count? Who marks off the conceptual boundaries, and under what authority, and for what reasons? Have those boundaries and that authority been contested, and if so, by whom? With what success, and by virtue of what strategies of resistance?” These are the levels on which I would like to see ecocriticism theorize the environment (1996: 143).

Peter Barry included a chapter titled “Ecocriticism” in the second edition of his Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and cultural theory (2002), but claims that ecocriticism has no universal model. He gives a list of what ecocritics do, which includes reading of literature from an ecocritical point of view, applying ecological issues to the presentation of the natural world and showing appreciation for ethical
positions toward nonhuman nature. One of the most common concerns of ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between the human and the non-human, throughout human cultural history. The study entails critiquing the term ‘human’ itself, thus its focus moves away from man-centered to earth-centered and from the inner to the outer.

The question is how one can contribute to environmental restoration, within our capacity as teachers of literature. The answer lies in recognizing that current environmental problems are largely a by-product of culture. As historian Donald Worster explains,

We are facing a global crisis today, not because of how ecosystems function but rather because of how our ethical systems function. Getting through the crisis requires understanding our impact on nature as precisely as possible, but even more, it requires understanding those ethical systems and using that understanding to reform them. Historians, along with literary scholars, anthropologists, and philosophers, cannot do the reforming, of course, but they can help with the understanding. (The Ecocriticism Reader 1996: xxi).

Similarly, in philosophy, various subfields like environmental ethics, deep ecology, ecofeminism, and social ecology have emerged in an effort to understand the right relations with the earth.

Ecocriticism poses a variety of questions. Loretta Johnson, frames questions in The Fundamentals and Future of Ecocriticism (2009: 32) such as: ‘Would a shift toward an ecological perception of nature change the ways humans inhabit the earth?
Do authors impute certain values and make assumptions when they present the environment and nonhuman life in their works’? Evidently, these questions are of great significance. The new critics attempt to address questions such as these in their exposition of ecocriticism.

William Rueckert who coined the term ecocriticism in 1978 in his essay "Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism," wrote that ecocriticism entailed “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). Rueckert’s definition includes all possible relations between literature and the physical world. Some scholars question how one can contribute to environmental restoration, within one’s capacity as a scholar of literature beyond arousing general awareness to the approaching crisis. However, various approaches like environmental ethics, deep ecology, ecofeminism and social ecology have emerged as a result of scholars’ endeavour to understand and analyse the root causes of environmental degradation, and then to formulate an alternative view of existence, which will provide an ethical and conceptual basis for right relations with the earth.

Ernst Heinrich Haeckel (1834-1919), a German biologist and philosopher of evolution, used for the first time the term ecology in 1876. ‘Ecology’ is a term derived from German ‘Oecologie’, meaning “the branch of biology that deals with the relationships between living organisms and their environment” (Johnston 2000: 193). The etymology of the word ‘Ecology’ (oikos + logos) describes it as the knowledge of the household science. According to Selvamony “the oikos integrates the natural, the cultural and the sacred” (2003: 314). Gary Snyder (2008) in an interview with Harding
calls this nexus, “the workings of energy exchange between living and non-living systems” (web May 30th 2008). Therefore, Ecology is not a binary relationship between an organism and the environment; it is inclusive of the interrelationship among the environment, society and the individual. Thus an analysis of a text in terms of these three components is termed “Oikiocriticism” or “Oikopoetics”.

The first law of Ecology is this: everything is connected to everything else. Bringing literature and ecology together is a lesson in the hardest, cruelest realities which permeate our profession. Barry Commoner quotes “Any living thing that hopes to live on earth must fit into the ecosphere or perish” (*The Closing Circle* 1972: 8).

Ecocriticism is the criticism of the “house”, the environment, as represented in literature. The word ‘environment’ refers to the totality of the physical surroundings, circumstances, conditions, on the earth or a part of it, especially as affected by human activity. A biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment is called ecosystem. According to *Collins Dictionary of Environmental Science* “physical environment” is the combination of external conditions that influence the life of individual organism. The fundamental concept of ecology is that everything is interrelated and nothing is separate. Ecological concerns have been the subject of literature for a long time without the writers focusing on them, and the readers becoming aware of them. However, the ecological movement in the last few decades has gained considerable momentum and has drawn the attention of the intellectuals, academics, writers, and scientists to the grave issue of man-land (nature) relationship.
Ecocriticism can be considered a broadband of critical concerns which accommodates a wide spectrum of perspectives ranging from the political to the sacred. Interdisciplinarity is an essential aspect of its nature; “although ecocriticism can touch virtually any discipline, when it translates into action, it generally comes back to its home ground – the human relationship with the earth” (Dean 4).

One of the important features of ecocriticism is that it sees nature and human culture as interwoven rather than as separate sides of a dualistic construct. A viable ecocriticism must continue to challenge dualistic thinking by exploring the role of nature in texts more concerned with human cultures, by looking at the role of culture in nature and by attending to the nature-focused text as also a cultural-literary text.

How Ecocriticism differs from other approaches

The common literary–critical analysis presents the external (characters, objects) as the internal (as elements of the subconscious). In contrast to the above, the ecocentered reading focuses on the outside, the house and its environs, rather than the inside (author and his psychology). It uses the ideas of energy, entropy (which is a kind of negative energy within systems which tend towards breakdown and disorganization), and symbiosis (living together, mutually sustaining, co-existing systems). In other words, literary theory examines the relations between writers, texts, and the world. In most literary theory “the world” is synonymous with society--the social sphere. Ecocriticism expands the notion of “the world” to include the entire ecosphere. An ecocritical reading of a literary text is, simply, one which in some way incorporates the kind of issues that have been discussed above. Therefore, a study that gradually shifts from “Inside” to “Outside” is termed Ecocriticism.
Ecocriticism, Green Studies and Nature Writing

According to Peter Barry ecocriticism began in the United States of America in the late 1980’s, and Green Studies in the United Kingdom in the early 1990’s. Ecocriticism has existed in the United States of America for quite a long time, and takes its literary bearings from the nineteenth century American writers whose work celebrates nature, the life force, and the wilderness as manifested in America, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller and Henry David Thoreau. All the three writers are members of the group of New England writers known as the Transcendentalists. Emerson’s first short book Nature (1836) is a reflective essay on the impact of the natural world upon him often spoken in words of powerful dramatic voice. In this work, Emerson talks about the mystical unity of nature and urges his readers to enjoy a relationship with the environment. Fuller’s first book was Summer on the Lake (1843), a powerfully written journal of her encounter with the American landscape. Thoreau’s Walden (1854) is an account of his two year stay (1845-47) in a hut he had built on the shore of Walden Pond. The book centers on dropping out of modern society and seeking to renew the self by a ‘return to nature’. These three books can be called the foundational works of American “ecocentered” writing.

Green Studies

The American idea of the picturesque is rooted in the British aesthetic theory, hence we need to learn about its development in Europe before discussing its influence on the new world. Ecocriticism or Green Studies in the United Kingdom takes its origins from the British Romanticism of the 1790’s rather than from the American Transcendentalism of the 1840’s. Jonathan Bate of Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental tradition (1991) is the founding figure of this new field in
Britain. The study on ecocriticism in the United Kingdom is much less extensive than in the United States of America, though the study is introduced in schools of higher education. Hence most of the active British proponents of ecocriticism are based at a few institutions which offer the study. A Collection of essays by Laurence Coupe, *The Green Studies Reader: from Romanticism to Ecocriticism* (2000) shows the evolution of ecocriticism from Romanticism in United Kingdom. Romantic ecocritics examine the ways in which romantic writers and thinkers participated in and responded to the history of ecological science and environmental ethics. And this is given the name “Green Studies”. The term “Green Studies” is thus used by the British writers while the American writers use the term “ecocriticism”.

**Nature Writing**

The word *nature* comes via Old French from the Latin ‘natura’ (meaning conditions of birth, quality, character, natural order, and world). In Sanskrit it is called Prakriti from which the physical and mental universe evolved under the influence of Purusha. In the imaginative literature of the eighteenth century nature meant the presentation and construction of the actual characters of people corresponding to reality. Since pre-Christian or the Vedic times nature has always been accorded the status of the Great Mother. In Christianity there is the implication that nature is created for human beings who are ‘her’ children. In the Vedas it is mentioned that there is a harmony between human beings and nature.

Interest in the study of nature writing and in reading literature with a focus on "green" issues grew through the 1980's and by the early 1990's ecocriticism has emerged as a recognizable discipline within the literature departments of the American Universities.
Kathleen R. Wallace writes in *Beyond Nature Writing: Expanding the Boundaries of Ecocriticism* (2001) that beyond nature writing the contributors share the belief that ecocriticism offers a critical perspective that can enliven any literary and theoretical field. Environment need not only refer to “natural” or “wilderness” areas; environment also includes cultivated and built landscapes, and cultural interactions with those natural elements (18).

Reviving the romantic sensibility in poetry, William Wordsworth chose wild nature as the backdrop of his poems. One could say that it was he who pioneered “nature” writing. In Wordsworth, the self communes with nature. Two of the most important works of ecocriticism in the 1990’s were studies of Wordsworth and Shelley. The concerns of “nature writing” are eighteenth century topographical writing such as ‘the scenic sublime’ (lakes, mountains, cliffs, waterfalls) and ‘the countryside’ (hills, fields, woods).

In the Victorian period, following the impact of natural science, nature was portrayed as essentially hostile, baleful and apathetic to human beings, though Thomas Hardy portrayed Nature as a sympathetic backdrop for human suffering, and focused on those characters that were in close touch with Nature. In his novels nature served as a powerful element. For instance the change of seasons in *Tess of the D’Urbervilles* (1891) reflected in the character of Tess herself, and there was a direct parallelism between the moods of nature and character reaction to nature. Hardy has used nature to convey meaning and feelings to the reader. Seasons, climate and nature in general became an integral part of his portrayal of character. Apparently, all but Hardy in the Victorian period approached nature with hesitation or with neutrality. In the twentieth century nature-ecology is represented broadly by writers.
Relationship between nature and culture

Ecocritics reject the notion that everything is socially or linguistically constructed. For ecocritics nature really exists, out there beyond us. There have been set-piece confrontations on this issue and some of the most heated exchanges have taken place between the American Wordsworth critic Alan Liu and various ecocritics, including Jonathan Bate and Terry Gifford. The issue of the social and linguistic construct of reality has tended to generate confusion. It is a fact that attitudes to nature vary, and some of the variations are culturally determined.

Glotfelty draws the link between nature and culture. She views ecocriticism as:

Despite the broad scope of inquiry and disparate levels of sophistication, an ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it. Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture. Understanding how nature and culture constantly influence and construct each other is essential to an informed ecocriticism. As a critical stance, it has one foot in literature and the other on land. As a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between the human and the nonhuman (The Ecocriticism Reader 1996: xix).

An ecocriticism that sees humans fundamentally as part of nature will attend to representations of human cultures in all their diverse interaction with nature rather than focusing only on texts that show humans observing or experiencing nature in the wild or rural setting.
Peter Barry, in his essay on “Ecocriticism” in *Beginning Theory* (2002), calls the ‘outdoor environment’ as a series of adjoining and overlapping areas which move gradually from nature to culture:

- ‘the wilderness’ (e.g. desert, oceans, uninhabited continents)
- ‘the scenic sublime’ (e.g. forests, lakes, mountains, cliffs, waterfalls)
- ‘the countryside’ (e.g. hills, fields, woods)
- ‘the domestic picturesque’ (e.g. parks, gardens, lanes)

As we move through these areas, it is clear that we move from what may be called ‘pure’ nature in the first to what is predominantly ‘culture’ in the last area. The two middle areas contain large elements of both culture and nature. “Nature writing” focuses on the two middle areas. While American transcendentalist writing of the nineteenth century was predominantly interested in area one, the domestic fiction and lyric poetry centers upon the relationship between human beings with a setting of the last two areas. The first two areas are preferred settings for epic and saga which focus on relationships between human beings and cosmic forces.

There has been a special renaissance in the area of what might be called “environmental/ecological literature,” a name that has replaced ‘nature writing’. This approach, much pronounced in America, almost since the time the Europeans landed on the new continent in early seventeenth century, and much specialized since 1950’s, focuses on the relationship between human culture and the world of nature--the eco world.

**The Growth of Ecocriticism**

The study of literature's relationship to the physical world has been with us, in the domain of the pastoral tradition for a long time. But it is only towards the end of
1960's that the word ‘ecology’ has surfaced from a subfield of biology to encompass the same root conflict whose history and cultural implications Marx had so effectively interpreted through the development of American Literature from its beginnings to Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby* (1925).

Since its origin ecocriticism has proliferated from the study of American nature writers into a highly diverse and interdisciplinary field encompassing a wide variety of literary genres, and cultural and literary theories, as well as drawing upon the social and natural sciences. Ecocritics today work on many projects with an emphatic focus on the welfare of ecosystem, employing ecophilosophy, environmental ethics, evolutionary biology, eco-psychology, ecology and other related disciplines.

David Mazel in *A Century of Early Criticism* (2003) demonstrates that studies of nature in literature have long flourished under critical rubrics as American studies, and pastoral criticism. However, since the 1960’s and 1970’s ecocriticism seems clearly an offshoot of environmental awareness. The century in the title of the book refers to 1864-1964, a period he represents by the work of “more than thirty proto-ecocritics.”

In the 1970’s the relationship between literature and environment emerged as a topic of serious and widespread interest among writers and scholars. The writings of Joseph Meeker, William Rueckert, and Neil Evernden are the seminal works of ecocriticism. Joseph Meeker in his seminal work, *The Comedy of Survival: Studies in Literary Ecology* (1974) affirms that as the world’s only literary creatures, human beings have the responsibility to discover the role of literature in the welfare and survival of mankind and the natural environment and also to examine the “insight it offers into human relationships with other species and with the world around us” (3-4).
The ideas and texts that grew out of this period subsequently got consolidated into the field now known as ecocriticism. During this period individual literary and cultural scholars were developing ecologically informed criticism and theory, but they did not organize themselves into an identifiable group. In a sense, every critic was inventing an environmental approach to literature in isolation. Each was a single voice shouting in wilderness.

Ecocriticism had its official beginnings as a discipline in the 1990's. The writings of Thoreau and Emerson fall into the ecocritical mould. Thoreau’s *Journal* marks the obvious beginning point of this psychological tradition in American nature writing because it records the authors’ sustained empirical scrutiny of his own internal responses to the world. Scott Slovic writes:

> 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 for all contemporary American nature writers, the prototypical literary investigation of the relationship between nature and the mind is Thoreau’s *Journal*. The *Journal*, is actually an example of nature writing at its purest. It gives the sense of Thoreau’s actual presence in the natural world throughout.
Dillard, Abbey, Berry and Lopez have produced their work during 1960’s and 1970’s. Their works are hardly as neutral as that of Thoreau. Today, a growing number of landscape writers offer essays, poems, and fiction that represent the human relationship to the natural landscape in ways that are often antithetical to our culture’s usual emphasis.

The notion that literature is a combination of nonhuman and human contexts, nature and culture found a few critical proponents during the 1970’s and 1980’s. The late nineteenth century and early twentieth century witnessed the transfer of the old machine garden conflicts into the immediate present, over wilderness, old growth forests, pollution and spreading urban blight. The works of writers like Mary Austin, Gary Snyder, Barry Lopez, Terry Tempest Williams kept such issues at the forefront of the publications during these years.

In the mid 1980’s and in the early 90’s there has been a substantial growth in Environmental literary studies. In 1985 Frederick O. Waage edited Teaching Environmental Literature: Materials, Methods, Resources and in 1989 Alicia Nitecki founded The American Nature Writing Newsletter, whose purpose was to publish brief essays and book reviews on nature and environment. Some Universities in America began to include literature courses in their environmental studies curricula. During the 1990’s and at the turn of the century, the study of literature and environment grew rapidly under rigorous leadership.

In 1990 the University of Nevada, Reno, created the first academic position in literature and environment. In 1991 MLA (Modern Language Association) special session was organized by Harold Fromm, entitled “Ecocriticism: The Greening of
Literary Studies,” and in 1992 American Literature Association Symposium chaired by Glen Love conducted a session, entitled “American Nature Writing: New contexts, New approaches.” In 1992 at the annual meeting of the Western Literature Association, a new Association for the Study of Literature and Environment (ASLE) was formed with Scott Slovic elected as the first president. Within one year ASLE had more than 300 members. In 1995 its members numbered over 750 and ASLE held its first conference in the same year.

The mission 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” and to encourage “new nature writing, traditional and innovative scholarly approaches to environmental literature, and interdisciplinary environmental research.” In the initial phase ecocriticism was a meeting place for American critics dealing exclusively with American Literature. Being serious proponents of this theory and trying to demonstrate and enable the verification of their results, ecocritics have founded their association ASLE (Association for the study of Literature and Environment) and their journal ISLE (Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment). ASLE is an invaluable platform for ecocriticism. Today, it has grown to a membership of 1004 from different parts of the world. The members are interested in the natural world and they contribute to its study. Founded in 1992, ASLE seeks to facilitate interdisciplinary and innovative approaches to the study of nature and culture through forms such as nature writing, art, ecocritical scholarship, poetry, and creative writing. Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment (ISLE) seeks to explore the relationship between human beings and the natural world. Michael Branch says,
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).

The Association for the Study of Literature and Environment is started at a meeting of the Western Literature association, and some of the most prominent departments in ecocriticism are in the West at Reno, the University of Oregon, and the University of California at Davis. Literary scholars in the association have tried to define the term ecocriticism.

The term ecocriticism has been interpreted by scholars as vague and perhaps misleading. Stephanie Sarver says, “I admit to using the term to identify a range of approaches to the study of literatures that share a common concern with the relationship between humans and the non-human world. This concern, however, is better labeled an environmental approach to literature than ecocriticism” (web 10th Aug 2010). David Taylor studies ecocriticism as a “broad gangly term” that groups very disparate types of criticism: some overtly polemic, others seemingly disinterested in cultural critique. According to him “Ecocriticism is an inherently polemic form of scholarship because in examining cultural constructions of environment, ecocriticism suggests a revaluation of the readers own cultural constructions of environment” (web 13th Aug 2010).
Harry Crockett says “Ecocriticism elucidates relationship between human and non-human nature, privileging literary inscriptions of those relationships for all the usual reasons why we in this profession privilege literature” (web 15th Aug 2010). Ecocriticism is a study that is connected with the human relationship to the natural world. Ecocriticism is a response to the need for humanistic understanding of our relationships with the natural world in an age of environmental destruction. Thomas K. Dean writes “Although ecocriticism can touch virtually any discipline, when it translates into action, it generally comes back to its home ground—the human relationship with the earth. Ecocriticism advocates for an understanding of the world that works to heal the environmental wounds humans have inflicted upon it” (web 18th Aug 2010).

The need to study literary works on ecocritical perspectives is mentioned by various scholars. For instance Kent Ryden says “The ecocritical stance reconnects literary study to both the processes and the problems inherent in living on this heavily burdened planet, focusing our attention anew on the ground beneath our feet, on our complex relationship to that ground, and on the implications of our behavior toward that ground” (web 18th Aug 2010). Ryden stresses on the human relationship with the ground. Similar to his views, Don Scheese comments “Ecocriticism is most appropriately applied to a work in which the landscape itself is a dominant character, when a significant interaction occurs between author and place, character(s) and place. Landscape by definition includes the non-human elements of place—the rocks, soil, trees, plants, rivers, animals, air as well as human perceptions and modifications” (web 19th Aug 2010). Like Scheese, Allison B. Wallace views ecoliterature as any writing that focuses on place. He says, “Writing that examines and invites intimate human experience of place’s myriad ingredients: weather, climate, flora, fauna, soil, air, water, rocks, fire, minerals, ice as well as all the marks there of human history” (web 21st Aug 2010).
Thus the definitions of ecocriticism are based on Western Literature. Indeed, in some ways ecocriticism still hasn’t quite broken into the main stream. The ecocritical interest can be explained in two ways:

1. Man exists within some natural environment. That is the reason why he is a life-long wanderer, on the one hand, and why he is always identified with the familiar physical and cultural environment, on the other. Man is wandering in nature for personal identity and to find his roots. The end of the twentieth century showed clearly that everyone has to do something to help the earth survive.

2. The last decade of the twentieth century was the time when it became obvious that the greatest problem of the twenty first century would be the survival of the earth.

This unusual combination of the physical and the spiritual can be seen in some of the terms used in ecology and ecocriticism both of which have the same aim. As a pedagogical practice, ecocriticism explores language as a co-evolutionary process of the earth. It articulates the symbiotic relationship between land and landscape, text and terrain, and recognizes that language is not separate from the world of nature.

The ecological function of art is to connect the human with the biosphere. Each human being is to the biosphere as Microcosm is to the Macrocosm. For thousands of years human beings lived as one with nature. Many ancient literatures capture the importance and quintessential nature of ecological sensitivity.

According to Campbell, in most indigenous societies the distinction between nature and culture is non-existent or the two overlap. Conservation is engendered traditionally through cultural discourses like oral narratives in the form of myths and
folklore, rituals, customs and conventions, which facilitate a symbiotic relationship between man and nature. The indigenous communities have their own rules and beliefs governing their access and use of the forests. Conservation is engendered by sanctifying nature, and at the same time imbuing it with horror-inducing characteristics. Biocentrism as a concept outlines the conviction that “humans are neither better nor worse than other creatures (animals, plants, bacteria, rocks, rivers) but simply equal to everything else in the natural world” (The Ecocriticism Reader 1996: 128).

Ever since the dawn of civilization man has not only depended on nature but also exploited it. His survival depends on his intellectual faculties with which he seeks to dominate the rest of the creation. Land has come to denote power, making man more powerful. However, man has always longed for reunion with nature, a return to his older, more natural self of nurturer rather than possessor. Hence ecocriticism gives human beings a better understanding of nature. For a very long time nature was not given its due consideration. Man’s voracious urge to conquer nature is a known fact. He also feels that he is superior to other forms that inhabit this biosphere. Now we have come to understand that nature is also a co-inhabitant and not a subordinate.

Every human being acquires knowledge through various experiences of “nature.” Even just a passive observation of nature gives knowledge. The sea, sand, mountains, rivers, plants, animals, climate, temperature and seasons influence the character and thinking of a person. Environment influences persons and inspires them to live ecologically. The emotional attachment and commitment to a place influences a person’s experience and shapes his personality.
Important Concepts in Ecocriticism

As ecocriticism is by nature interdisciplinary, it draws on environmental studies, the natural sciences, and cultural and social studies. The awareness of ecocriticism has been there since the dawn of civilization. The Poets, artists, and thinkers have been emphasizing the close kinship between nature and man from times immemorial. Human life is inconceivable without the presence of wider nature.

In the ancient times man was aware of the indispensable relationship between nature and himself. He protected, nurtured and cherished nature so that nature might protect and nourish the human race. The interdependence was highlighted in classical writing of both the east and the west. But new philosophies and new experiences have shifted the focus and made the European civilization more and more anthropocentric and bolstered the egotism of the human beings, making them believe that they are not only the best of God’s creation, but are the monarchs of the entire visible world. This idea replaced the earlier concepts and sentiments that survival on earth is inconceivable without the presence of the wider nature that nature is not there merely for the aesthetic pleasure or artistic satisfaction of the human beings but a precondition for the very survival of the human race.

As civilization grew more aggressive and arrogant, man began to despoil and exploit all aspects of nature for his self aggrandizement, self-glorification and self-indulgence. He rifled the earth for metal, destroyed the trees for his habitats and for industry; he destroyed the natural beauty of landscape with the setting up of industrial establishments, polluting land, water and air. It is a black chapter in the story of human race where violence and exploitation were the main theme.
Some artists and philosophers have objected to this mindless and senseless exploitation of nature and its wealth. Following this, Freud, as well as some modern writers of poetry and fiction have sought to bring nature into serious consideration. Whatever be the light of landscape they described, be it desert, sea, or wilderness, still they tried to link it with human character and human fate. Landscape in these works is present not for itself, as an inanimate and ineffectual plastic background for the tale but as something living, vibrant and affecting as well as conveying the emotion of the situation and the ideology of the writer.

In this sense ecocriticism becomes interdisciplinary as it seeks to relate nature and man through variegated means and tries to look at the relationship from various view points: sociological, psychological, anthropological, scientific and philosophical. But before addressing those various points of view, there is a need to look at the way the relationship has suffered a gradation in terms of the central concerns. Greg Garrad in his Ecocriticism (2004) lists out the various concerns of ecocriticism.

- Pollution
- Wilderness
- Apocalypse
- Dwelling
- Animals
- The Earth

Pollution

Ecocriticism can help to define, explore, and even resolve ecological problems in this wider sense. Let us first look at the word pollution which is derived from the Latin polluere meaning ‘to defile’. Until the seventeenth century it denoted moral contamination of a person, or acts thought to promote such contamination. This essentially interior or subjective definition was gradually transformed into an exterior
or objective one – in fact, specifically environmental definition. “Pollution” has various levels of representation from the implicit environmental to explicit environmental concerns. Environmental problems require analysis in cultural as well as scientific terms, because they are the outcome of an interaction between ecological knowledge of nature and its cultural inflection. Environmentalists are those who are concerned about environmental issues such as global warming and pollution--those who would not welcome radical social change. They value rural ways of life, hiking or camping. They are concerned about natural scarcity in or pollution of nature.

**Wilderness**

Ecocritics investigate whether the examination of “place” should be a distinctive category much like class, gender and race. Ecocritics examine human perception of wilderness and ecocriticism ideates the concept of wilderness in multiple ways. The idea of wilderness refers to the absence of humanity, yet “wilderness” has no meaning outside the context of the civilization that defines it. Wilderness is often viewed as a sacral space, a place of refuge, or even a condition that needs to be challenged. Wilderness is the landscape of ultimate authenticity. It integrates the entire habitat into an ecological community, which is mutually symbiotic. For example the forest can be viewed as primeval entity, a dwelling and a teacher.

The idea of wilderness, signifying nature, is a state uncontaminated by civilization. Wilderness has an almost sacramental value: it holds out the promise of a renewed, authentic relationship between humanity and nature, a post-Christian covenant, found in a space of purity, founded in an attitude of reverence and humility. Shakespeare viewed wilderness/forest as morally pure and unsophisticated as illustrated in the songs in *As You Like It*. 
Unlike pastoral, the concept of wilderness came to cultural prominence only in the eighteenth century, and the ‘wilderness texts’ discussed by ecocritics comprise mainly writings of non-fictional nature. Wilderness narratives share the motif of escape and return with the typical pastoral narrative, but the construction of nature they propose and reinforce is fundamentally different. If the pastoral is a distinctive old world construction on nature, suited to long-settled and domesticated landscapes, wilderness fits the settler experience in the new worlds. Thoreau’s *Walden* (1854) can be regarded as the terminus of old world pastoral in American literature, as it collides with both the technology and autonomous cultural confidence of the young republic. Thoreau’s works exhibit noble eloquence and genuine insights into wilderness. According to him the true assertion of the purity of the spirit was to “go back to nature,” to build a cabin in the wood. It is in nature one could discover oneself.

The modern canon of American wilderness writing is quite extensive, with important writers like Thoreau and Muir in the nineteenth century, Mary Austin, Aldo Leopold and Edward Abbey in the twentieth century. Margaret Atwood’s *Surfacing* (1972) reflecting this preoccupation with wilderness, is a profound ecological novel. Her novel makes it clear that there is a demonstrable relationship between men and the ways in which they treat and destroy nature. The energy of love in Walt Whitman’s *Song of Myself* (1855) flows out of Whitman into the world and back into Whitman from the things of the world in one of the most marvelous ontological interchanges that can be found anywhere in poetry. This ontological interchange between Whitman and the biosphere is the energy pathway that sustains life in the poet. There is a complete ecological vision in this poem, just as there is in Whitman’s conception of a poetry cycle which resembles the water cycle within the biosphere. Whitman says that poems come out of the poets, go up into the atmosphere to create a kind of poetic rain,
nourish us and make us creative and then are recycled. Thoreau situated himself within nature, and drew upon all the senses – he devoted an entire chapter to sounds, for example – to convey what was going on around him in the green world. The forces at work in the pond and the forest he found are also at work in himself.

On the one hand, man is a lifelong wanderer and on the other he is always identified with the familiar physical and cultural environment. The later explanation results from the fact that man feels vitally threatened in the ecologically degraded world. The threat of the wilderness from logging, hydroelectric projects, wars and commercial tourism drives one into an increasingly alienated and paranoid state. Over-exploitation of natural resources and man’s disregard of the air, water and soil that sustain him have given rise to the question of the survival of both man and earth. An awareness of this paranoia leads to a discussion of Apocalypse in modern literature.

**Apocalypse**

As described in The Bible, Apocalypse is the final destruction of the world. Apocalyptic narratives began around 1200 BCE, in the thought of the Iranian prophet Zoroaster or Zarathustra. Orthodox, Roman Catholic and for the most part, Protestant Christianity has promoted comic apocalypticism. Apocalyptic rhetoric seems a necessary component of environmental discourse. Rachel Carson’s classic *Silent Spring* (1962) highlights the dangers of pesticide and sets off the great environmental debates of the twentieth century. Nuclear war, tidal waves, bio-engineering, global ecological disaster, man-made or natural, the list is enormously diverse and apparently endless. Lawrence Buell’s work on American culture, *The Environmental Imagination*, (1995) declared: “apocalypse is the single most powerful metaphor that the contemporary environmental imagination has at its disposal” (93).
‘Earth First!’ the powerful environmental organization, has adopted the basic assumptions of apocalyptic environmentalism, seeing death of species as unavoidable. Their opposition – human verses the wilderness—situated humans almost entirely on the side of evil. In most cases, the works of the apocalyptic imagination see little hope for the earth. Hence ecocritics ponder on the protection of the earth and man’s contribution for the reconstruction of nature in case of devastation.

**Dwelling**

Since the sixteenth century, ‘primitive’ people have been represented as dwelling in harmony with nature, sustaining one of the most widespread and seductive myths of the non-European ‘other’. Dwelling is not a transient state; rather, it implies the long term imbrication of humans in a landscape of memory, ancestry and death, of ritual life and work. As historian Shepard Krech III has argued, this advert helped to crystallize a cultural stereotype of ‘Ecological Indians’ that had deep roots in the Euro-American culture. He says that from book covers to movie screens to gallery exhibitions, “the dominant image is of the Indian in nature who understands the systemic consequences of his actions, feels deep sympathy with all living forms, and takes steps to conserve so that earth’s harmonies are never in imbalance and resources never in doubt” (1999: 21).

Pastoral and wilderness imply the perspective of the aesthetic tourist, while the apocalypse encodes the vision of a prophetic imagination. But ‘dwelling’ represents a long term association of humans with the landscape.
Animals

Like ‘pastoral’ and ‘wilderness’, ‘animals’ too have a range of important functions. The Utilitarian philosopher Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) suggested that cruelty to animals was analogous to slavery and claimed that the capacity to feel pain, not the power of reason, entitled a being to moral consideration. The Utilitarian ‘principle of equality’ states that everyone is entitled to equal moral consideration, irrespective of family, race, nation or species. Mary Midgley’s Animals and Why They Matter (1983) remains an excellent introduction to animal ‘welfarism’.

Liberationist criticism typically attempts to undermine the moral and legal distinctions between humans and animals, but it takes for granted the difference between wild and domestic animals. Wild animals are linked to masculine freedom, while domestic animals are denigrated as feminine servants of human depredation.

One of the key concerns of wildlife documentaries is that some species may become extinct. Humans have been held responsible for many local extinction episodes. The favorite location for wildlife documentaries is the African Savannah with ‘Charismatic megafauna’ such as elephant and giraffes, where the camera sometimes seems to stand in for the colonial figure of the white game hunter.

Ecocriticism thus discusses the problem of the troubled boundaries between the human and other creatures.

The Earth

Andrew Ross, one of the few ecocritics working on popular rather than literary culture, counts a photograph of the Earth taken by Apollo astronauts, amongst his ‘images of ecology’: 
In recent years, we have become accustomed to seeing images of a dying planet, variously exhibited in grisly poses of ecological depletion and circulated by all sectors of the image industry, often in spots reserved for the exploitation fare of genocidal atrocities (1994: 171).

As Ross shows, the US military has historically evaded environmental legislation, while preparing for wars that wreck extraordinary ecological damage upon foreign lands. It is essential for ecocritics to give greater consideration than they have thus far done to the transformation in the dominant meaning of the word ‘earth’: from the most immediate ground of existence, the soil, to life’s largest relevant context, the biosphere, because the future is as important a concern of the ecocritics as the rest.

As the present project undertakes to study the short stories of Hemingway under five different heads of ecocriticism namely, deep ecology, ecofeminism, ecosphere, oikopoetics and ecocide, it would only be pertinent to describe these five subfields of ecocriticism in a little detail.

**Deep Ecology**

Deep Ecologists, Arne Naess, Bill Devall and George Sessions have taken conceptual positions in their philosophy of nature that are quite problematic. Deep ecology proposes new norms of human responsibility to change the human exploitation of nature into co-participation with nature. Deep Ecology believes in the fundamental interconnectedness of all life forms and natural features. It believes that anthropocentric thinking has alienated humans from their natural environment and caused them to exploit it.
Deep ecologists argue that their principles are nothing new. They see themselves borrowing the “ancient truths” of preindustrial and non-urban thinking. When the deep ecologist calls for a return to nature, nature claims a normative role for him in working out an ecosophical approach to nature. By an ecosophy Naess means a philosophy of ecological harmony or equilibrium. According to Devall

Deep ecology goes beyond a limited piecemeal shallow approach to environmental problems and attempts to articulate a comprehensive religious and philosophical worldview. The foundations of deep ecology are the basic intuitions and experiencing of ourselves and Nature which comprise ecological consciousness.…Deep Ecological sense of self requires a further maturity and growth, an identification which goes beyond humanity to include the nonhuman world (67).

The second norm of deep ecology is “biocentric equality” which affirms the equality of all things in the biosphere. “Biocentric equality is intimately related to the all-inclusive self-realization in the sense that if we harm the rest of Nature then we are harming ourselves. There are no boundaries and everything is interrelated” (69). This is so because all organisms have “an equal right to live and blossom and to reach their own individual forms of unfolding and self-realization within the larger self…” Biocentrism as a concept outlines the conviction that humans are neither better nor worse than other creatures but are simply equal to everything else in the natural world.

In 1972 Arne Naess introduced the terms “deep ecology movement” and “ecosophy” in a talk in Bucharest, whose summary was published in Inquiry in 1973. An ecosophy is a way of life that has or strives for ecological wisdom and harmony.
Naess stresses the need to be nonviolent and respectful in our language as well as our actions. According to him when two people live and work together in harmonious creativity the quality of life becomes greater and deeper.

The poet laureate of deep ecology is Gary Snyder and its philosophical guru is Arne Naess, who is also a member of the movement. In regard to deep ecology movement, he and others have proposed eight platform principles of this philosophy:

1. Human life forms are an integral part of the earth.
2. Human forms must expand to include more of the others.
3. There has to be an emotional relation with and response to nature and not merely a rational-intellectual relationship.
4. Both human and non-human life forms have intrinsic values.
5. The value of non-human life is not dependent upon the usefulness of these life forms for humans.
6. While human life can flourish with smaller numbers of humans, for non-human forms to flourish, it requires smaller numbers of humans. That is, ecosystem in nature can only tolerate a certain level of human activity or interference.
7. The emphasis should be on appreciating the quality of life.
8. Those who accept the aforementioned points are responsible for trying to contribute directly or indirectly to the realization of necessary changes.

The fourth point distinguishes a deep ecologist from an environmentalist. Deep ecology demands recognition of intrinsic value in nature. A shift from a human-centered to a nature-centered system of values is the core of the radicalism attributed to deep ecology, bringing it into opposition with almost the entirety of the Western philosophy and religion:
Deep Ecology is concerned with encouraging an egalitarian attitude on the part of humans not only toward all members of the ecosphere, but even toward all identifiable entities or forms in the ecosphere. Thus this attitude is intended to extend, for example, to such entities (or forms) as rivers, landscape, and even species and social systems considered in their own right (Sessions 1995: 270).

It is not being sentient that qualifies an entity or form for intrinsic value, but rather, it would seem, whatever kind of purposive organization one could claim to find equally in a single bird, a river, an entire species, a distinct ecosystem or an ethnic group.

Gary Snyder represents a blending of deep ecology and social ecology. Social ecology means that social and environmental problems are intertwined. Human beings achieve self-realization through participation in a creative and non-dominating human community. Since the early 1970’s, Snyder has couched his ideal in terms of bioregionalism, a complex movement that centers on the distinctiveness of different local regions. Social ecology serves as an approach to evaluating the environmental and social thought of any writer.

Deep Ecologists believe that nature possesses the same moral standing and natural rights as human beings. Thus Deep Ecology proposes a respect not only for all life forms but also towards landscapes such as rivers and mountains.

**Ecofeminism**

Ecofeminism is a term coined in 1974 by the French Feminist Francoise d’Eaubonne. It is a philosophy and movement born from the union of feminist and ecological thinkers. D’Eaubonne’s description focuses on the similarities or
interconnectedness of the way women and nature are treated in paternalistic societies. This idea of a parallel between the treatment of women and treatment of nature is one of the hallmarks of ecofeminism. As there is no single definition of ecocriticism there is no single convincing definition of ecofeminism either. Ecofeminism emphasizes the interconnectedness of all life.

Ecofeminists argue that the domination of women and the domination of the environment are parallel in many ways if not altogether identical. If deep ecology identifies the anthropocentric dualism of humanity/nature as the ultimate source of anti-ecological beliefs and practices, ecofeminism blames the androcentric dualism of man/woman. A deep ecologist believes in personal transformation through the cultivation of a “biocentric perspective” and expansion of one’s identification to encompass all of nature. While sharing a biocentric perspective, ecofeminists have criticized deep ecology because of its masculinist bias. Deep ecologists deny the significance of gender and feminist analysis.

Deep ecology argues that man distinguishes humans from nature on the grounds of some supposed possession of an immortal soul or racial supremacy and assumes that he is superior to other forms of life. The Ecofeminist argues that man distinguishes men from women on the grounds of some alleged quality such as larger brain size and then assumes that this distinction confers on men superiority over women. The difference between deep ecology and ecofeminism is that while deep ecologists identify the problem as anthropocentrism, the ecofeminists identify the problem as androcentricism and hierarchial dualism. Similarly, deep ecologists’ desired ends is biocentricism. Whereas ecofeminists focus on patriarchy and their desired end is social design on feminist principles and beyond power.
Ecofeminism argues that there is a parallel between women and nature that comes from their shared history of oppression by a patriarchal society. Ecofeminists claim to be part of a distinct social movement. They feel that men dominate women and humans dominate nature. Naturally, then women and the environmentalist should be united in their struggle.

The connections between the oppression of women and the oppression of nature are highlighted in order to understand why environment is a feminist issue, as well as why feminist issues can be addressed in terms of environmental concerns (Gaard 1993).

Nature has always been thought of in feminine terms, because of her tenderness, fertility and generosity in nourishment. Nature is described in motherly terms in many cultures and languages. Moreover, woman more than man is considered to be closer to nature: because both share the pangs of birthing and caring. The ecofeminists, analysing these parallels, see a process of devaluation of both ‘nature’ and ‘women’. This exploitative attitude, typically patriarchial, seems to have arisen over 5,000 years ago.

Ecofeminism is rooted equally in environmentalism and women’s liberation – two powerful movements that flowered in the 1970’s. Combining the feminist and ecological perspectives, ecofeminism makes the women/nature connections: the domination, exploitation, and fear of both women and nature are characteristic of patriarchal thinking.
In 1978, Susan Griffin’s *Woman and Nature* captured the attention of the scholars, but the diffusion of the idea did not become apparent until after the conference on Ecofeminism “Women and life on Earth: A conference on Ecofeminism in the Eighties” was conducted. As the environmental movement along with environmental crises raised the consciousness of women to the decay of the earth, they began to see a parallel between the devaluation of the earth and the devaluation of women.

Ecofeminist activism grew during the 1980’s and 1990’s among women from the anti-nuclear and environmental movements. Mary Mellor says they draw “connections between exploitation and degradation of the natural world and the subordination and oppression of women” (*Ecofeminism and Environmental ethics* 1999). The primary aim of ecofeminism is that it does not seek equality with men as such, but aim for liberation of women as women. Davion says that “women have been associated with nature, the material, the emotional, and the particular, while men have been associated with culture, the non-material, the rational, and the abstract” (*Is Feminism Feminist?* 1994: 17) and she suggests that it makes a common cause between the feminist and the ecologist.

Karren Warren, one of the founders of Ecofeminist philosophy, claims that environmental damage is a form of violence. Ecofeminists such as Warren (1994) and Plumwood (1993) bring to bear social and philosophical insights which give the position far greater depth, scope and vigour. Val Plumwood’s analysis merely differentiates men from women, human from nature and reason from emotion. She advocates both similarity and difference in the human-nature continuum. According to Warren (1994) both the arguments share a common “logic of domination.” Karren
Warren notes “Ecofeminism is an umbrella term for a wide variety of approaches. One may be a social ecofeminist, cultural ecofeminist, etc. What holds these disparate positions together is the claim that there are important connections between the domination of women and the domination of nature” (Ecofeminism 1997: 5).

According to ecofeminists, nature is a feminist issue. Ecofeminist philosophy extends familiar feminist critiques of social isms of domination (eg., sexism, racism) to nature. Greg Garrard writes “Ecofeminism calls for an end to all oppression, arguing that no attempts to liberate women will be successful without an equal attempt to liberate nature” (Ecocriticism 2004: 132). The analyses of Gilligan and Warren indicate that ecofeminism, which asserts the fundamental interconnectedness of all life, offers an appropriate foundation for an ecological ethical theory for women and men who do not operate on the basis of a self or other disjunction.

Dr. Vandana Shiva complements the idea of interconnectedness of women and nature. As a philosopher, eco-feminist and environmental activist, she is one of the original tree huggers from the 1970’s. She won the prestigious Sydney Peace Prize 2010 for her commitment to environmental justice. She says “Ecofeminists have described a number of connections between the oppressions of women and of nature that are significant to understanding why the environment is a feminist issue, and conversely, why feminist issues can be addressed in terms of environmental concerns” (Ecofeminism 1993: 13). According to Shiva (1989) “Ecofeminists link their project as much to the politically oriented positions associated with social ecology and eco-marxism as to ethically and spiritually oriented deep ecology” (15).
Birkeland says, “It is an awareness that begins with the realization that the exploitation of nature is intimately linked to western Man’s attitude towards women and tribal cultures” (Ecofeminism 1993: 22). Therefore, ecofeminism is a value system, a social movement, and a practice, but it also offers a political analysis that explores the links between androcentrism and environmental destruction. Ariel Salleh writes that there is a “parallel in men’s thinking between their ‘right’ to exploit nature, on the one hand, and the use they make of women, on the other” (Ecofeminism as Politics 1997: 9).

Lori Gruen draws connections between women and animals. According to him “Ecofeminists have attempted to eliminate hierarchies and undo the logic of domination. Ecofeminist theory seeks to show the connections between all forms of domination, including the domination of nonhuman nature. Ecofeminism discusses the relationship among human beings, the natural environment and the nonhuman animals” (Ecofeminism 1993: 16). Ecofeminists believe we can learn from pre-partriarchal societies where women were valued. They believe that there was a time before written history, some 250,000 years ago, when co-operation, not competition, was valued. During this period female deities were widely worshipped and societies were more women-centered.

Irene Diamond lists out three strands of ecofeminism: The first strand emphasizes the need to achieve social justice since human life is dependent on the earth. The second strand in ecofeminism is spiritual, emphasizing that the Earth is sacred unto itself. The third strand emphasizes the necessity of sustainability, a need to learn how to respect the earth (1990: 45).
The central premise of ecofeminism remains to be the suppression of women and nature. The dominations of women and nature are linked in various ways e.g. historically, materially, culturally, or conceptually. Charlene Spretnak, sees ecofeminism as one of the “new ecologies” that include deep ecology, bioregionalism and animal rights. Ecofeminist school of thought believes that women have a special relationship with nature by virtue of their biological role and nature has to be liberated from the repressive male ethos.

In 1998, Greta Gaard noted that “Ecofeminism is not a single master theory and its practitioners have different articulations of their social practice” (Ecological Politics 268). Ten years later the branches of ecofeminism continue to expand and now they include spiritual, social, radical and Marxist forms. More than a theory about feminism and environmentalism, or women and nature, as the name might imply, ecofeminism approaches the problems of environmental degradation and social injustice from the premise that how we treat nature and how we treat each other are inseparably linked.

Lawrence Buell cites differences and conflicts between the fields of ecocriticism and ecofeminism. He describes ecofeminism as one of the catalysts “towards increasing acknowledgement of ecocultural complexity after an initial concentration now increasingly thought to have been too narrowly focused.” Noel Sturgeon writes:

Ecofeminism is a movement that makes connections between environmentalisms and feminisms; more precisely, it articulates the theory that the ideologies that authorize injustices based on gender, race and class are related to the ideologies that sanction the exploitation and degradation of the environment (Ecofeminist Natures 1997: 132).
Sharon Doubiago (1989) asserts that ‘ecology consciousness is traditional woman consciousness.’ Yet feminists have long argued against the acceptance of some ‘feminine essence’ grounded in biological sex, showing instead how gender is culturally constructed. Radical ecofeminism appears to give us a mirror-image of patriarchal constructions of feminity that is just as limited and limiting. Radical ecofeminism clearly functions as an inspiration to many to change their lives, but as a critical philosophy its irrationalism and essentialism are serious limitations. Radical ecofeminist essentialism has been criticized by ecofeminists, with having a philosophical or sociological orientation. Davion (1994) points out that “a truly feminist perspective cannot embrace either the feminine or masculine uncritically (but) requires a critique of gender roles, and this critique must include masculinity and feminity” (23). This objection now seems to have been generally accepted by ecofeminists.

To sum up, ecofeminism emphasizes environmental justice to a far greater degree than deep ecology. The logic of domination is implicated in discrimination and oppression on grounds of race, sexual orientation and class as well as species and gender. In order to get a clear picture of the environment we need to study it in all its gradations from the pastoral to the wilderness.

Ecosphere

Pearsall defines this term in *The New Oxford Dictionary of English* as “Ecosphere is the biosphere of the earth or the other planet, especially when the interaction between the living and non-living components is emphasized” (1998: 586).
Gary Snyder, an ecologist has focused his study on local ecosystem. Snyder has couched his ideal in terms of bioregionalism, a complex movement that centers on the distinctiveness of different local regions. He says, if we are to understand truly and live harmoniously with nature, we need to become intimate with the distinctive particularities of each place.

Arne Naess introduces the terms “deep ecology” and “ecosophy” (1972) in a talk in Bucharest. As a child he has been fascinated by communication in the natural and human worlds. He discovered how to communicate with other beings in the mountains and even with a mountain he came to feel as if it were his ancient father. One of the major areas of study in Naess’s research has been communication systems, including natural languages and how communication systems evolve in ecological relationship connected to place. According to him there is a possibility to have a very rich quality of life even with low levels of material and energy consumption.

Oikopoetics

One of the significant outcomes of Ecoliterature is the evolution of an ecocritical method called “Oikopoetics.” As study of the oikos, ecology will not address merely a quantifiable and empirically verifiable relation between organisms and the non-organismic world, but acknowledges that the unquantifiable spirit is also a member of the oikos and therefore, the relationship among these three members will not be entirely quantifiable and empirical. Therefore, Oikocriticism is one of the dimensions of ecocriticism that analyzes the unity of the human, nature and the spirit.

Nirmal Selvamony has expounded tinai as a social order and written extensively about it in English and in Tamil. A paradigm for holistic land-human relationship can be found in tinai, an early ecocritical theory from the culture of the Tamils of South India. It is an example of an "integrative oikos", in which "the sacred,
the human, natural and cultural phenomena stand in an integrated relationship....Being
the habitat of the people concerned, *oikos (tinai)* forms the matrix of all social
institutions, economy, polity, family and communication" (314). Though early Greek
life was based on the *oikos*, no known theory of the *oikos* had emerged in Greece,
whereas the early Tamils had formulated a theory of *tinai*, which may be the earliest
known "ecocritical theory." The earliest source of this theory is the most ancient Tamil
text existent, *tolkappiyam*.

Selvamony relies on the ancient Tamil text *tolkaappiyam* (III.3.2:1-2) to assert
that the oikos ontologically consists of the triad: self (*onru*), other (*veeru*) and the
emergent (*onri uyarnta paal*). According to *tolkappiyam* (II.3.29), the context of any
act has eight factors: act itself, agent, object, place, time, medium, recipient and end.
So, Selvamony says, that context should be the first principle of literary criticism.

**Ecocide**

Ecocide is the most predominant concern of the ecocritics. According to Collins
Dictionary ecocide is defined as “the destruction of the natural environment, especially
when willfully done”. Glen A. Love identifies various modes of ecological disaster
that take place in the physical environment:

The disquieting fact is that we have grown inured to the bad
news of human and natural disasters…. Actual instances of
radiation poisoning, chemical or germ warfare, all rendered
more threatening by the rise of terrorism. Industrial accidents
like that in Bhopal, India, where the death toll lies between
20,000 and 30,000. Destruction of the planets’ protective
ozone layer. The over cutting of the world’s remaining great
forests. An accelerating rate of extinction of plants and
animals, estimate at 74 species per day and 27,000 each year. The critical loss of arable land and ground water through desertification, contamination, and the spread of human settlement. Overfishing and toxic poisoning of the world’s oceans (Practical Ecocriticism 2003: 14-15).

Much ecocriticism has been taken for granted that its task is to overcome anthropocentrism, just as feminine seeks to overcome androcentrism. Wilderness experiences, apocalyptic threats are supposed to provide the impetus or the example by which individuals come to an authentic selfhood oriented towards right environmental action.

Ecocriticism in India

Nirmal Selvamony from Madras Christian College, Chennai introduced “Ecoliterature” (1985) a postgraduate course at Madras Christian College. Today ecocriticism is taught in India both as a full paper and also as a part of a paper like Literary theory in departments of English in some Colleges and Universities.

Survey of ecocriticism in America

Nature alone is not the focus of ecocritical studies. Other associated areas of focus include animals, specific geographical regions, cities, rivers, mountains, desert, Indians, technology, and the body. The neglected genre of nature writing came from England with Gilbert White’s A Natural History of Selbourne (1789) and extends to America through Henry Thoreau, Mary Austin, Aldo Leopold, Rachel Carson, Edward Abbey, Barry Lopez, Annie Dillard, Terry Tempest Willams and many others.
The natural world comprises not just people but also animals, plants; and even “inert” entities such as stones and rivers which are perceived as being articulate and at times intelligible subjects, that are able to communicate and interact with humans for good or ill. Christopher Manes says that “In addition to human language, there is also the language of birds, the wind, earthworms, wolves, and waterfalls-a world of autonomous speakers whose intents (especially for hunter-gatherer peoples) one ignores at one’s peril” (The Ecocriticism Reader 1996: 15). Similarly, some strains of deep ecology have stressed the link between listening to the nonhuman world and reversing the environmentally destructive practices modern society pursues. There is a need to establish communication between human subjects and the natural world. Mircea Eliade writes: “All over the world learning the language of animals, especially of birds, is equivalent to knowing the secrets of nature….” (Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy 1972: 98).

The American idea of wilderness might seem closer to the aesthetic category of the sublime than to the picturesque. In fact, the American wilderness has gradually been transformed from a sublime landscape into a series of picturesque scenes. The American wilderness, however, has been gradually reduced and circumscribed until it no longer seems to stretch into infinity, but is contained and controlled in established boundaries.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the word picturesque – which had once referred to things that were graphic, visually particular, capable of being represented in a picture – came to designate a specific mode of pictorialism. The picturesque scene is able to obscure the boundary between nature and human art because the origin of its “artistry” is unfixed. The picturesque aesthetic as it was
developed in English painting and poetry was eventually imported to America, exerting considerable influence on poetry and art long after it ceased to be in vogue in England. The American wilderness differed greatly from the landscapes that determined the specific aesthetic elements of an ideally “picturesque” scene. But the self-conscious aesthetic mastery that characterized the picturesque was reflected in American attitudes towards nature. As natural areas in the U.S have diminished, the public has come to perceive the National Park Service as its primary provider of the wilderness experience. This image of wilderness is as much an aesthetic construct as picturesque views of the Lake District. Tucker says “wildernesses….. are essentially parks for the upper middle class” (58). But although true wildernesses may be accessible only to a privileged few, national parks can approximate the wilderness experience for a large audience by presenting a landscape that reproduces a scenic facsimile of wilderness, a mythologized image of what we would like the wilderness to be.

As an interdisciplinary science, ecology describes the relations between nature and culture. Ecology is a science strongly connected to a history of verbal expression. As a vernacular science, ecology was widely adopted by many disciplines to read, interpret and narrate land history. Rapid settlement and spoilage of American land after 1900 spurred the rise of resource conservation in forestry and fishery, as ecological concepts of association, climax, and niche arose to describe the biomes of the eastern forest and the western grasslands. Several ecologists wrote histories of regional land leading to the Ecological Society of America in 1920.

The years of Depression and World War II turned ecology even more strongly discourse ecology also defined ethical principles, as in Rachel Carron’s landmark work, Silent Spring (1962) which aroused awareness about the use of pesticides that
poison ground water and destroy biodiversity. Ecology advanced from description to advocacy after 1960, as its stories presented ethical choices that affect land and people. Ecological study shapes a new ethics in landscape history just as telescopes and satellites photograph new maps of the earth.

In the early national years, settlers breached the eastern ranges, and spilled into open grasslands, creating on the prairie a settlement of the northern Europeans. Upon this empty and enigmatic period men and women wrote lives that revised social traditions and adapted their homes and towns to regional resources. Later on, sectional strife between the North and the South over slavery became a struggle between two bioregions. The far west seemed to offer respite; for on the plains people could build frontier settlements, or cross the mountains in pursuit of silver and gold – all dreams that later failed, exhausting and emptying the region.

In the twentieth century, the American story is off limits reached and strained, a time of sobering recognition that human growth can destroy natural resources; but those losses also aroused a new sense of land and intricate relations it supports. Open, unsettled land continues to raise ethical choices, testing the ability of human beings to learn from land.

The most influential work in American ecocriticism to date, is Laurence Buell’s *The Environmental Imagination* (1995). This book provides a thorough critique of pastoral ideology in American fiction, with an extended treatment of Thoreau that moves from the evaluation of Walden’s ‘environmental projects’ through an analysis of the author’s canonization in American literary history. It also focuses on ecocriticism, to a reconsideration of the role and significance of nature writing in the literary canon. Thoreau’s trajectory of nature writing makes him an exemplary figure, and reveals the changing place of environment in American culture and academic literature.
Neil Evernden in his essay “Beyond Ecology” (1996) says that the subversive tenet of ecology is interrelatedness. He puts questions such as “Where do you draw the line between one creature and another? Where does one organism stop and another begin? Is there even a boundary between you and the non-living world, or will the atoms in this page be a part of your body tomorrow?” (95) Paul Shepard in “Place in American Culture” says that there is some connection between the individual and his particular place. According to him “knowing who you are is impossible without knowing where you are from” (1970: 32). The subversive nature of ecology rests on its assumption of literal interrelatedness, not just interdependence. Ultimately, preservation of the non-human is a very personal crusade. There is no such thing as an individual, only an individual—in-context, individual as a component of place, defined by place.

**Pre-Thoreauvian literature of nature**

The early romantic connection between human and nonhuman nature also helped nurture the rise of natural history studies in America. If the national faith was to be based upon the vast, uncorrupted wilderness of the new continent, it became imperative to explore, survey, and describe that wilderness as a means both of appraising and expressing American prospects.

The work of William Bartram, Alexander Wilson, John James Audubon illustrate the important contributions made by natural history writers during the early romantic period. The romantic natural historians helped to relocate divinity in wilderness, elaborating upon the deistic presupposition that the creator is manifest in nature; they affirmed America’s moral advantage over domesticated Europe by emphasizing God’s sublime presence in the New World landscape. All the three
writers helped introduce a pattern of ecological thinking in American culture; through emphasis upon a feeling of membership in a natural community and upon the morally regenerative qualities of nature, these writers offered an alternative to the dominant and dominating expansionary ethos of the age, and thereby helped initiate a minority tradition of environmental concern into American intellectual history.

William Bartram, “the vagabond naturalist”, gazed at the American countryside and wrote *Travels* (1791) a scientific and literary classic of the period. His books are a greater contribution of a person fully immersed in the experience of American wilderness. Bartram’s appreciation for the wonderful intricacy of natural systems and his belief that everything manifests “the divine and inimitable workmanship” combined to produce a sensibility that may be described as proto-ecological. Throughout the *Travels* Bartram’s incisive observations reveal and celebrate the fabric of interrelationships that he recognized in the wilderness.

Alaxander Wilson, inspired by the beauty and diversity of American birds, devoted his life to their study, began traveling many thousands of miles on foot in search of undiscovered species. By the time of his death only eleven years after meeting Bartram, his friend, Wilson was the nation’s foremost authority on birds, and had completed nearly all nine volumes of his monumental *American Ornithology* (1808-29). Wilson assumed very deliberately that his natural history was a contribution not only to science, but to the cultural identity of the nation. Wilson’s romantic narrative poem “The Foresters,” is about his twelve hundred mile foot journey to the falls of Niagara. Although literary history does not remember Wilson as a poet, “The Foresters” is an excellent example of how thoroughly enmeshed were his literary and natural historical sensibilities. The poem finally reaches its crescendo at Niagara, where the travelers gaze with “holy awe” upon the sublime falls. Both as an
ornithologist and as a romantic poet, Wilson responded to the unsung beauty of the American wilderness by leading readers on a pilgrimage into the heart of their own country. Wilson combined his scientific and literary talents in order to record the national treasures of America’s birds.

Like Bartram and Wilson, John James Audubon traveled thousands of wilderness miles in order to discover, study, and document native species. Like them he understood the role of a natural historian to be complementary with that of romantic author. In “The Ohio,” the very first of his episodes, Audubon makes explicit his vision of the link between American literary accomplishments and the need for documenting a disappearing wilderness. Audubon’s writing is characterized by unmistakable elements of early romanticism in America: a fondness for the picturesque in natural scenery; a powerful attraction to “the American Sublime”, a propensity for melodramatic sentimentality and an enduring interest in native Americans. He provided the most fascinating study of the naturalist as romantic hero because he so self-consciously cultivated the identity. He knew how to satisfy his audience’s romantic appetite for wilderness. Through his paintings and his prose, he effectively brought the vanishing wilderness before a popular audience. Much of his writing laments the swiftness with which wilderness is being lost. Russell quotes that Henry Thoreau wrote that he read Audubon “with a thrill of delight” – had removed himself to Walden pond, and asked “Where can I go now, and visit nature undisturbed?”

Thus the works of Bartram, Wilson and John James Audubon make clear that early romantic natural history literature is an essential source of American nature-writing tradition. Each was motivated by a desire to represent the beauty of American wilderness on the eve of its inexorable destruction. All the three celebrated their
kinship with nonhuman nature, thereby introducing into American letters the proto-
ecological sensibility upon which further developments in the genre of natural history
writing would depend. The famous accomplishments of such literary contributors are
Henry Thoreau, John Muir, Mary Austin, Annie Dillard, and Barry Lopez.

**Women’s response to the American landscape**

Rachel Carson, Isabella Bird, Mary Austin and Annie Dillard are the four
women who contributed to the American landscape writing. Rachel Carson was a
heroine to many women of the 1950’s and 1960’s. She is best remembered for her
classic *Silent Springs* (1960). Her study of the oceans in *The Sea Around Us* (1951)
earned her National Book Award. Carson recognizes an organic, interactive
connection between humans and the rest of the biosphere. She began to understand the
destructive impact civilization had on the environment, and was presented with a
dilemma: the growth of civilization destroys the environment, but only through
increased knowledge can destruction be stopped.

Isabella Bird’s *A Lady’s Life in the Rocky Mountains* (1878) is a series of letters
she wrote to her sister during her visit. She provides an excellent beginning point in
understanding how women respond to nature in America. Bird discovers herself in
nature, comes to a better understanding of her place in the world, while seeking a
transcendent experience in nature that will take her beyond herself and into
contemplation of God.

Mary Austin’s *The Land of Little Rain* (1903) is her most famous book. The
book provides vibrant descriptions, achieved only by patient observation, of the
interacting physical and biological landscape of the desert Southwest. Austin values all
life in the desert, and attempts to show how each small piece is integral to that larger
whole. Austin values both the Indian and Hispanic for their alternate approach to the
development of the American landscape – natural and cultural.
Annie Dillard’s *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* (1975) begins with a classic vision of uncertainty about the American landscape – are we in Eden or the desert? The book is a meditation upon the beauty and horror of and in creation. She concludes that beauty exists in spite of the horror and terror of the great bulk of the natural world and that it is finally found equally in the grand and the simple – in the mountains and the wind. Dillard sees nature as a religious door. Her primary concern is her individual, personal relationship to God and nature.

Women nature writers have been described as filling only secondary roles; they seem to have written mostly for children or helped organize the Audubon clubs in order to raise other women’s consciousness about the destructive effects of wearing bird feathers in their hats.

Most nature writers, from Thoreau to the present, walk a fine line between rhapsody and detachment, between aesthetic celebration and scientific explanation. In other words, the very mysteriousness of nature contributes to the independence and, presumably, the self-awareness of the observer. For all of these contemporary American nature writers, the prototypical literary investigation of the relationship between nature and the mind is Thoreau’s *Journal* (1906). The *Journal*, an almost daily record of observations, shows the author’s efforts to line up his internal rhythms with those of external nature.

One of the important issues in contemporary nature writing is how this literature translates into concrete changes in readers’ attitudes toward the environment, and into more environmentally sound behavior. Cheryll Burgess, the author of a paper entitled “Toward an Ecological Literary Criticism”, which was delivered at the 1989 meeting of the Western Literature Association, argues that it is the responsibility of critics and teachers to point out the environmental implications of literary texts, to engage in “ecocriticism.”

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What Ecocritics do

Ecocritics investigate such things as the underlying ecological values, what, precisely, is meant by the word nature, and whether the examination of "place" should be a distinctive category, much like class, gender or race. Ecocritics examine human perception of wilderness, and try to find out how it has changed through history and whether or not current environmental issues are accurately represented or even mentioned in popular culture and modern literature.

Ecocritics ask questions such as

1. How is nature represented in the work?
2. What role does the physical setting play in the work?
3. Are the values expressed in this work consistent with ecological wisdom?
4. How do our metaphors of the land influence the way we treat it?
5. How can we characterize nature writing as a genre?
6. In addition to race, class, and gender, should place become a new critical category?
7. Do men write about nature differently than women do?
8. In what ways has literacy itself affected humankind’s relationship to the natural world?
9. How has the concept of wilderness changed over time?
10. In what ways and to what effect is the environmental crisis seeping into contemporary literature and popular culture?
11. What bearing might the science of ecology have on literary studies?

Paul Shepard bridges the gap between nature and the 'nature' of the text when he attempts to define literature that attends to ecology. According to him, essays on nature are, “natural objects, like bird nests” since they are, "an element of a functional
or feedback system influencing men's reactions to their environment," as real a part of the community in both the “one species sociological” and many species ecological “senses as are the songs of choirs and crickets." Nature writing often privileges wilderness as an authentic, pure form of the landscape. It is the very opposite of a corrupted human condition and man-made landscape. Ecocriticism places a high premium on texts that situate nature as authentic and pure.

**The main task of ecocritics**

- They re-read the text from an ecocentric perspective and identify the natural world.
- They apply a range of ecocentric concepts, using them of things other than the natural world--such as growth and energy, balance and imbalance and sustainable or unsustainable uses of energy and resources.
- They give special canonical emphasis to writers who foreground nature as a major part of their subjects.
- They extend the range of literary-critical practice, reflecting topographical material such as essays, travel writing, memoirs, and regional literature.
- They turn away from the ‘social constructivism’ and ‘linguistic determinism’ to ecocentric values of ethical responsibility.

**How to evaluate a text**

Lawrence Buell suggests four criteria for evaluating a text for its environmental consciousness:

1. The non-human dimension is an actual presence in the text and not merely a facade—thus implying that human and non-human worlds are integrated.
2. The human interest is not privileged over everything else.
3. The text shows humans as accountable to the environment, and shows any actions they perform which damage the ecosystem.

4. Environment is a process rather than a static condition.

As can be seen from the foregoing description of ecocriticism, it is not a uniform theory but several strands run through it. As Coupe (2000) points out ecocriticism itself is a diverse biosphere: “There is no single, dominant world-view guiding ecocritical practice--no single strategy at work from one example to another example of ecocriticism, writing or teaching.”

**The scope of Ecocriticism**

From a historical point of view, authors have always assigned values to nature that directly followed their popular representation in the contemporary society. Without showing a sense of inclination to the mythical or allegorical conceptions, the contemporary authors have developed their own way of using nature as a vehicle of expressing complex ideas.

All ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it. Ecocriticism takes the interconnections between nature and culture, specifically the cultural artifacts of languages and literature as its subjects. As a critical stance, it has one foot in literature and the other on land, as a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between the human and the non-human. Ecocriticism expands the notion of "the world" to include the entire ecosphere.

In China, many literary critics have begun to work on ecocriticism, among which LU-Shu-yuan's *The Aesthetics of Ecology* in 2000 and WANG Nuo's *European and American Ecological Literature* are best known. Ecocritics have found the role of
nature in Thomas Hardy's writings. Next, D.H. Lawrence made use of nature as a means of transmitting literary meaning. Nature in modern literature is considered as the vehicle of enhancing the thoughts and feelings that constitute the ideological core of literary work.

The ecological function of art is to connect humans with the biosphere. From another direction, much of what we have and share in poetry, story, music, dance, painting, and the rest, is the biosphere celebrating or contemplating itself. Creating art is a process of integration of the human part of life with the wholesomeness of life.

The first principle of ecology is that everything is connected. Life on the Earth is above all correlative. All is connected systematically by relationships of energy transfer and matter exchange and by solar processes that govern wind and water. All lives are interwoven and dependent on other life. All living beings are intimately coupled with many other living beings, their health is our health.

No life exists in isolation; every life exists embedded in a context of relationships. This context is often metaphoried as a network or a web. Each and every living organism is interconnected to one another in a network, be it an organism or physical event, and the lines between them is their relationship. This enormous combination of ecosystem we call the biosphere is so thoroughly integrated that the density of relationship blacks out the visual metaphor. Indeed there is a peculiar set of relationships between place, art and bioregion. For example school children in Australia found Wordsworth fanciful and could not follow the poem as they do not know the local topography and landscape of the Lake District. Similarly, students at Malaysia may not understand Keats “Ode to Autumn” as they do not experience autumn season.
An Eco-literary text attempts to express the relationship among the sacred, the human and the nature in an *oikos*. It is the wisdom of understanding the human and the sacred through nature. Ecocriticism gives human beings a better understanding of nature. It is not just studying nature as represented in literature. It helps human beings have a broader view despite their apparently incorrigible anthropocentrism due to their selfish nature. Yet ecocriticism, despite its shady borders, and multitudinous definitions, continues to be vibrant and relevant to literature, an approach that promises to stay.

Literature, in its mission of artistically representing the author’s truth, thus is called to portray ecological realities, which can include taking note of the diminishment and degradation of nature. According to Glen A. Love the field of ecocriticism examines how we think about, and express artistically, the complexities of the natural world. It looks at the implicit assumptions about nature that are embedded in the invented world of literature through which the author aspires to speak.

Serpil Opperman comments with a wide range of authors and academic voices from around the world, ecocriticism today has taken a multicultural transnational stance. The entry of new transnational perspectives and interpretive methods into the ecocritical field has initiated a multi-directional trajectory and initiated a debate about where ecocriticism is heading. Many of the environment issues are studied in relation to the growing impact of climate change, the disruption of local ecosystems, and other environmental in securities. Involvement with cultural processes has produced various different ecocriticism, including postcolonial ecocriticism, environmental justice ecocriticism, and urban ecocriticism (2010: 8).
Ecocriticism has not developed a methodology, although its emphasis on interdisciplinarity assumes that the humanities and science should be in dialogue and that its debates should be informed equally by critical and creative activity. While ecocritics study literature written throughout history and analyse its relationship to the environment, most scholarship has focused on American and British literature from the nineteenth and twentieth century.

One of the reasons why ecocriticism continues to grow as a discipline is the continued global environmental crises. Ecocriticism aims to show how the work of writers concerned about the environment can play some part in solving real and pressing ecological concerns. More and more ecocritics are applying ecocritical theories to works of writers who showed their propensity to relate human and nature and to read human character through their response to the oikios. Ernest Hemingway is one of the major American writers in whose work one comes across this ecological interplay between man and landscape, human and animal and living and nonliving.
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