

## Usage of Eco-criticism: As a view of natural environment preserving

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### Abstract:

The environment is sum of all surroundings, living organisms, including natural forces and other living beings. There is a deep relationship between beings' life and the environment. As a part of environment human must understand that relationship, but unfortunately the human beings do not care about this relationship and pollute the environment in several ways without any attention. In the process of environmental protection, literature also has an important role to play, because there is a strong relationship between environment and literature. Environment is one of main phenomenon in literature and many literary work have been compiled according to that theme both eastern and western literature. Apart from literature, literary criticism too was affected by environment. As results of this eco-criticism, a new literary theory has arisen. This research mainly focus on how we can use eco-criticism to make an attitudinal change in human mind and how can they lead to preserve the natural environment in literary field. Three novels namely Aranakata pem bada translated by Chintha Lakshmi, Sansaranyaye Dadayakkaraya of Saimon Navagattegama and Diya holmana of Mahinda Kumara Dalupotha were selected as primary sources and many secondary sources too used to the fulfillment of this research goals. Eco-criticism studies the relationship between literature and the physical environment. It takes an earth centered approach to literary studies. By practicing this theory throughout literary work people can understand easily how environment is important to existence of their lives. Although the Sinhala literature was built in an environmental background, it has not developed as an ecological literature. But nowadays, some books that can be categorized under the eco-literature such as, Aranakata pem bada, Sansaranyaye Dadayakkaraya, Diya Holman are arising. Examining these novels, some concepts related with eco-criticism have emphasized by the authors as follows. Representing environment as a non-anthropocentric phenomenon, criticizing the environmental pollution, making environmental sensibility by producing ecological fact, emphasizing the ethics associated with environment. This means eco-criticism make an attitudinal chance in human mind with the intention of creating eco-minded human society.

**Keywords:** *Aranakata pem banda, Diya Holmana, Eco-criticism, Environmentalist literature, Sansaranyaye Dadayakkaraya.*

## Introduction

The environment is sum of all surroundings living organisms, including natural forces and other living beings, which provide conditions for development and growth as well as of danger and damage. When we consider about natural environment not only living things but also lifeless things include to it. There is a deep relationship between beings' life and the environment. As a part of environment human must understand that relationship, but unfortunately the human beings do not care about this relationship. According to Buddhism at the beginning of human society mankind reacted to the natural resources insatiability and there emerged endless struggles between the man and environment. This struggle is prevailing even present and the human beings are trying to capture the environment and rule it according to their wish so that they pollute the environment in several ways without any attention. These pollutions consist of five basic types of pollution, namely air, water, soil, noise and light which extremely effect to the existence of life of natural environment.

## Objectives

This research mainly focus on how we can use eco-criticism to make an attitudinal change in human mind and how can they lead to preserve the natural environment in literary field.

## Methodology

The research mainly based on literary sources. Therefore, *Aranakata pem bada* translated by *Chintha Lakshmi*, *Sansaranyaye Dadayakkaraya* of *Saimon Navagattegama* and *Diya holmana* of *Mahinda Kumara Dalupotha* were selected as primary sources. And also, many secondary sources are used where it necessary.

## Research findings

All kind of beings including human cannot live without environment. So, people must consider about protection of environment and should save it for future generation. Human is also part of environment. It is the place where he was born and grows up. The language and artistic productions like literature, music, dancing is also created with the affection of natural environment. All religions highly appreciated natural environment. Even in Buddhism, the path for the extinction of crave is also linked with environment. So, that we can understand that environment is the main philosophy of lifestyle. In the process of environmental protection, literature also has an important role to play, because there is a strong relationship between environment and literature. The literatures have been created by the experiences of environment. Rigveda, the first poetic creation in eastern literature, consists many poems related with natural environment. One of example is as follows:

‘Vi vāta jūto ataseshu testate vruthā – juhūbih srupyā tuvisvanih

Trushu yadagne vanino vrusāyaye – krusnā ta ema rūsadūrme ajara<sup>1</sup>  
(Rigveda)

[Agni propelled by the wind, {and}roaring with his tongues {and} with his sickle, easily spreads among trees. When youthful agni of burning flames {thou} dost quickly attack the forest trees thy path {becomes} black]

Later, Environment became one of main phenomenon in literature and arise many literary work according to that theme both eastern and western literature. Apart from literature literary, criticism too was affected by environment. As results of this eco-criticism, a new literary theory has arisen. This theory studies the relationship between literature and the physical environment. It takes an earth centered approach to literary studies. As 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. It asks questions like the following; ““how is nature represented in this sonnet? What role does the physical setting play in the plot of this novel? Are the values express in this play consistent with ecological wisdom? How do our metaphors of the land influence the way we treat it? How can we characterize nature writing as a genre? In addition to race, class and gender, should place become a category? Do men write about nature differently than women do? In what ways has literacy itself affected humankind relationship to the natural world? How has the concept of wilderness changed over time? In what ways and to what effect is the environment crisis seeping in to contemporary literature and popular culture? What view of nature informs U.S government reports, corporate advertising, and televised nature documentaries, and to what rhetorical effect? What bearing might the science of ecology have on literary studies? How is science itself open to literary analysis? What cross-fertilization is possible between literary studies and environmental discourse in related disciplines such as history, philosophy, psychology, art history and ethics?”<sup>2</sup>

The equilibrium existence between human and environment is the main concept for existence of whole world. By controlling the environment nobody can keep that equilibrium in safe, while preserving the environment it in safe hand. The duty of environmentalist literature is making the awareness about this in human mind. So the main object by this research is discussing the utility of environmental literary criticism for building an eco-minded human society. Although the Sinhala literature was built in an environmental background, it has not developed as an ecological literature. But some books that can be categorized under the eco-literature are arising at present. This research base on such 3 novles namely *Aranakata pem bada* translated by *Chintha Lakshmi*, *Sansaranyaye Dadayakkaraya* of *Saimon Navagattegama* and *Diya holmana* of *Mahinda Kumara Dalupotha*. The main aim of these novels is not directly related with environmental literature. But examining those 3 novels there are some concepts about environmental protection

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<sup>1</sup> **Rigveda** – with the origin Samhita anda pada Text in Sanskrit, Nirnaya Nagar Press, 1876, pp.840.

<sup>2</sup> Howarth, William, **The Eco criticism Reader**, The University of Georgia Press, London, 1996, pp. XIX.

which are going to discuss from this research. Those concepts can be mentioned as follows.

- Representing environment as a non-anthropocentric phenomenon
- Criticizing the environmental pollution
- Making environmental sensibility by producing ecological fact
- Emphasizing the ethics associated with environment

When we focus these concepts and how these were emphasized in environmentalist literature can get a clear idea how this literary tradition help to the protection of the environment.

- **Representing environment as a non-anthropocentric phenomenon**

A basic concept in environmentalism is ‘everything is connected to everything. According to that, everything is interdependent and reciprocal. It paves a meaningful way to relate man with environment. Human beings have an innate nature to think themselves as the center measurement of environment. In fact, humans cannot live without environment. Environmentalist concepts promoted by the respective literature imply that all living and non- living elements share equally important roles in environment alike. In the work “*Aranakata Pem Benda*” we can find an instance where ‘*satya*’ found her heartbeat being identifiable with the rhythm of flora. It questions the authority of mankind over nature.

“*Turu vaduḷa atarin nil pæhæti ākashaya disviya. Asaḷa vū ek vishāla mal væḷaka hatagat mal pokuru suḷange selavennata viya. Bohō pahaḷin gasa mula temuṇu pas sahita poḷove loku bimmal pipī tibiṇa... Eya gæmburu āsvadayak ati kara gæñma hæma vruksha latāvakama hruda spandanaya mage hadavate spandanaya vana rudhirayat samaga musu vī ætæi mata site.*”<sup>3</sup> (*Aranakata Pem banda*)

- **Criticizing the environmental pollution**

In the environmentalist literature, we can find how criticizing the environmental pollution and environmental conservation are emphasized and by artistically illustrating the consequences of environmental destruction. The Novel “*Dīya Holmana*” which shows the pesticides as a reason for the destruction of nature and oneself is a good example.

“*Ōn... balāpallakō mē mæhi tel gæhillak paṅangena vena vināshayak...yakō sākki mē vahakæṭiyak gæhuvā vitarai vel liyadivala unnu kuḍmæssō mærenḍa væṭunā. evun gil dæmma kokku mærenavā. Vakkadēn diyabona ali ættu mærenavā... Digin digatōma āḍāpāli kiva ukkurāla vidāne...*”<sup>4</sup> (*Diyaholmana*)

- **Making environmental sensibility by producing ecological fact**

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<sup>3</sup> Khandyopadyaya, Vibhuthi, *Aranakata Pem banda*, (Tra) Chintha Lakshmi Kumari, Wijesoriya book center, Mulleriyawa, 1998, pp 117.

<sup>4</sup> Dalupotha, Mahinda Kumara, *Dīya Holmana*, S. Godage and brothers, Colombo, 2000, pp. 100.

Environmental literature adds an esthetic value to ecological phenomenon. However, it differs from scientific ecology, both subjects show the truth that nature is sensitive about what is around alike. In the work “*Aranakata Pembenda*” There is an instance where nature endows its sublimed beauty to those who are faithful to it.

“*Sobādahame ræjiniya tama kerehi vūvaṅṅa denne amila dhanayaki. Kālayak tissee nokadavā æyata sēvaya kaḷa hot misaka kisivekuṅṅa ema dhanaya nolæbe. Sobādaham ræjiniya īrshyā saḡata bavak da paḷa karai. ... Yameku siyalla amataka koṅa svabāva saundayēma ælī gælī siḡi nam æya ē tæncættāṅṅa ānandayēda, saundayayēda, shāntiyēda, varaprasādada nomandava labā dei.*”<sup>5</sup> (Aranakata Pem banda)

- **Emphasizing the ethics associated with environment**

Apart from environmental laws, there are certain conventions and norms which make nature protected. In environmental literature, it is examined how far such norms and values affect the protection of nature. Harming others’ lives is a denial of fundamental rights and more importantly, a cause for the imbalance of nature. Nawagattegama’s “*Dadayakkarayage Kathava*” shows us one time how the hunter gives up his habits in a full moon poya day.

“*Ata ḷangama tuvakkuva vū namudu ē veta daḡayakkārayāgē atavat nogiyēya. Vesak māsayā læbuvāin pasu va, ohu daḡayamak kaḷā mataka næta. Mē rælē pæṅṅaun tundenek ūha. Dæn innē pæṅṅaun denneki. Anek pæṅṅiyā marāgena kævē, ohugē æs issarahamaya.*”<sup>6</sup>(Sansaranyaye Dadayakkaraya)

## Conclusion

The environment has been threatened to be destroyed by human’s activities at current society. Not only human life but also other beings’ life depends on the existence of natural environment. Therefore, preserving the environment has become very important phenomenon in every society over the world. Apart from other fields, literary criticism also has focus about this phenomenon in 19<sup>th</sup> century by creating literary theory called eco-criticism. This theory focuses on the relationship between literature and environment and emphasizes the values of it by exploring many concepts such as: Representing environment as non-anthropocentric phenomena, criticizing the environmental pollution, making environmental sensibility by producing ecological fact, emphasizing the ethics associated with environment to the public. This means eco-criticism make an attitudinal chance in human mind with the intention of creating eco-minded human society.

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<sup>5</sup> Khandyopadyaya, Vibhuthi, *Aranakata Pem banda*, (Tra) Chintha Lakshmi Kumari, Wijesoriya book center, Mulleriyawa, 1998, pp 107.

<sup>6</sup> Nawagattegama, Saimaon, *Sansaranyaye Dadayakkaraya*, S. Godage Brothers, Colombo, 1999, pp. 10-11.

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