
Rethinking Nature and Culture in Times of Environmental Crisis

Dr. Lahoti Ramesh Kachrual

Department of English, Kalikadevi Arts, Commerce and Science College, Shirur (Kasar)

Article Received: 24/01/2026**Article Accepted:** 25/02/2026**Published Online:** 26/02/2026**DOI:**10.47311/IJOES.2026.8.01.450

Abstract

The environmental humanities is an interdisciplinary approach which includes literature, history, philosophy, cultural studies, and the social sciences to examine the compound association between people and the natural environment. In the setting of environment change, ecological deterioration and environmental variation, the environmental humanities offer critical tools to understand how cultural metaphors, ethical summaries, and historical performs form human attitudes toward nature. This paper determines the space, importance and theoretical fundamentals of environmental humanities, with a discrete stress on literature's part in fostering ecological realization. By analysing chief ideas such as environmental imagination, Anthropocene discourse, and climate narratives, the paper claims that environmental humanities are noteworthy for talking present-day environmental catastrophes through cultural and ethical alteration.

Keywords: Environmental Humanities, Literature, Climate Change, Anthropocene, Ecocriticism, Culture

Introduction

Environmental crises such as climate dissimilarity, biodiversity damage, deforestation, and pollution convey unparalleled encounters to human survival and earthly wellbeing. While scientific and technological approaches are vital for understanding these complications, they alone are insufficient to address their cultural, ethical, and social scopes. This restriction has led to the advent of the environmental humanities, an arena that examines how human ideologies, thoughts, histories, and accounts form influences with the natural world.

The environmental humanities follow to link the gap between the sciences and the humanities by stressing storytelling, ethics, history, and cultural illustration. Literature, art, philosophy, and history play a pivotal role in defining environmental consciousness by persuading how people imagine nature and their position within it. As Amitav Ghosh argues, "the climate crisis is also a crisis of culture and thus of imagination" (Ghosh ,9) Therefore,

the environmental humanities suggest a significant framework for reviewing human apprehension toward the environment.

The environmental humanities has made a response to the growing comprehension that environmental problems are deeply deep-seated in cultural practices and historical progressions. Traditional humanistic disciplines had long apart nature from culture, often treating the natural world as an inactive background to human action. However, environmental philosophers confronted this separation by emphasizing the interconnectedness of humans and non-human things. The evolution of environmental movements in the late twentieth century, along with increasing ecological perception, contributed to the growth of ecocriticism, environmental history, and environmental approach. These disciplines collectively formed the foundation of environmental humanities. According to Ursula K. Heise, environmental humanities perceive “how humans imagine, represent, and engage with the natural world” (Heise,21).

Literature plays a leading role in the environmental humanities by defining environmental thoughts. Through stories, poems, and descriptions, literature allows readers to expressively encompass with ecological matters. Unlike scientific gossips, literary writings can arise empathy, moral replication, and a logic of anxiety toward the environment. Ecocriticism, a principal branch of environmental humanities, studies the representation of nature in literary texts. Primary nature writing by authors such as Henry David Thoreau emphasized correspondence between humans and nature, while current writers focusses on environmental destruction and climate change. Indian English literature, in precise, imitates ecological hesitations through depictions of rural life, displacement, and environmental disparity.

Amitav Ghosh’s *The Great Derangement* examines modern literature for its unsuccess to reasonably address climate change. Ghosh argues that the realist novel often excludes extreme environmental events because they seem improbable within conventional narrative structures (Ghosh,23). This disaster, he suggests, limits literature’s capability to respond expressively to the climate crisis. One of the most significant thoughts in environmental humanities is the Anthropocene, a prearranged geological time in which human action has become the foremost force defining the Earth’s systems. The Anthropocene encounters traditional transformations between nature and culture by emphasizing humanity’s considerate effect on the planet.

Environmental humanities researchers analyse the Anthropocene not only as a methodical concept but also as a cultural and proper one. It raises questionings about responsibility, justice, and power, primarily connecting the unequal involvement of different civilizations to environmental deprivation. Dipesh Chakrabarty argues “Global warming

forces us to rethink our conception of human history within a larger planetary framework” (Chakrabarty, 197-222)

Environmental humanities also focus environmental impartiality, focussing on how environmental troubles unreasonably influence side-lined communities. Subjects such as industrial pollution, climate-induced shift, and resource misuse reveal the ethical possibilities of environmental crises. By assimilating ethical examination with cultural investigation, environmental humanities challenge anthropocentric worldviews that gives preference to human reimbursements over ecological equilibrium. Philosophers such as Arne Naess is a follower of deep ecology, which identifies the basic value of all living beings. This moral lookout motivates sustainable practices and admire for non-human life.

Education plays a transformative role in inspiring environmental realization. Environmental humanities pay to education by cultivation of critical thinking, ethical reflection, and emotional assignation with ecological matters. Unlike exclusively technical strategies, humanities-based education highpoints values, attitudes, and responsibility. In English studies, environmental texts stimulate students to copy on their connotation with nature and society. Through literary inspection and cultural analysis, students develop a cavernous understanding of sustainability and ecological interconnectedness. Thus, environmental humanities prefer to indorse environmentally responsible people.

In the same way, present-day Indian eco-friendly thought has been formed by writers such as Vandana Shiva, who highlights the cultural and ecological significance of biodiversity. Shiva analyses the supremacy of industrial farming and globalization, arguing that they endanger traditional ecological knowledge and sustainable practices. She highpoints how original native cultures preserve pleasant-sounding relations with nature through admiration, conservation, and community-based living. Her work pays to environmental discourse by linking ecological devastation with cultural destruction and social unfairness. Shiva’s outlook stresses environmental calamity as not only a logical or ecological subject but also a cultural and principled disaster, where the damage of biodiversity matches the loss of cultural variety and traditional ecological perception.

Another vital contributor is Rob Nixon, who announced the idea of slow violence to define slow and often unseen environmental devastation. Nixon claims that environmental predicaments excessively disturb marginalized communities, particularly in postcolonial and evolving areas. His work highpoints how environmental ruin is thoroughly tied to power structures, economic variation, and cultural dislocation. Nixon’s influence lies in intensifying environmental criticism beyond instant adversities to comprise long-term ecological damage that unfolds over time. He highlights the part of literature in giving voice to affected communities and creating unseen suffering noticeable. Through his examination,

environmental disaster is understood as both an ecological and cultural phenomenon moulded by historical, political, and social forces.

In addition, literary figures such as Margaret Atwood have discovered environmental crisis through hypothetical and dystopian descriptions. Atwood's works represent futures formed by climate change, ecological ruin, and human technological excess, showing current concerns about environmental sustainability. Her writing inspects how environmental devastation disturbs human uniqueness, culture, and existence. By visualization of probable futures, she advises readers about the penalties of disregarding ecological duty. Atwood's role lies in using fiction as an instrument to raise environmental consciousness and aggravate ethical echo. Her narratives highlight that environmental disaster is not only a physical peril but also a cultural and moral challenge, preferring humanity to re-examine its association with the natural world and accept more sustainable habits of living.

One of the important figures in environmental ethics is Aldo Leopold, whose work *A Sand County Almanac* presented the important idea of the land ethic. Leopold claims that humans are not vanquishers of nature but associates of a wider ecological community that comprises soil, water, plants, and animals. He asserts that ethical obligation must spread beyond human society to the natural biosphere. In the context of environmental catastrophe, Leopold's viewpoint challenges anthropocentric thoughts and indorses a biocentric outlook, where ecological equilibrium and biodiversity are dominant standards. His influence lies in redesigning moral philosophy to comprise environmental duty, thereby connecting nature and culture through moral perception. Leopold's thought remains foundational in present-day environmental studies and ecocriticism.

In the same way, Ramachandra Guha has made imperative contributions to environmental history and environmental thought, chiefly in the Indian setting. In his comparative and historic studies, Guha inspects how environmental activities rise from social variations, reserve struggles, and cultural backgrounds. He highpoints grassroots movements such as forest protection scuffles, presenting how local communities protect their ecological human rights against industrial and state exploitation. Guha's work joins environmental disaster with subjects of democracy, development, and social justice. His scholarship enlarges environmental discourse by stressing that ecological sustainability must be culturally entrenched and socially all-encompassing. Through historical examination, he proves that environmentalism is not just a Western notion but intensely rooted in Indian social activities and cultural practices.

Conclusion

The environmental humanities bring a dynamic interdisciplinary summary for considerate and replying to present-day environmental crises. By integrating literature, history, philosophy, and ethics, this field highlights the cultural experiences of ecological glitches and the importance of thoughts in defining sustainable projections. Literature, in

exact, plays a dominant role in cultivating environmental realization by making abstract ecological themes zealously and ethically eloquent. As climate change and environmental deprivation reinforce, the insights of environmental humanities become increasingly significant. They remind us that environmental disasters are not only technical contests but also cultural and proper ones. By reimagining human relations with the natural world, environmental humanities suggest hopefulness for a more sustainable and fair future.

Works Cited

- Ghosh, Amitav. *The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable*. University of Chicago Press, 2016, p.9.
- Heise, Ursula K. *Sense of Place and Sense of Planet: The Environmental Imagination of the Global*. Oxford University Press, 2008, p.21. Opp cite, Ghosh p.23.
- Naess, Arne. "The Shallow and the Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movement." *Inquiry*, vol. 16, no. 1-4, 1973, pp. 95-100.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. "The Climate of History: Four Theses." *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 35, no. 2, 2009, pp. 197-222.
- Atwood, Margaret. *The Year of the Flood*. McClelland & Stewart, 2009.
- Guha, Ramachandra. *How Much Should a Person Consume? Environmentalism in India and the United States*. University of California Press, 2006.
- Leopold, Aldo. *A Sand County Almanac*. Oxford University Press, 1949.
- Nixon, Rob. *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor*. Harvard University Press, 2011.
- Shiva, Vandana. *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace*. South End Press, 2005.