

THE URBAN SPACE AS AN ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM: RE-READING T. S. ELIOT'S

PRELUDES

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Received: 29 Jun 2018

Accepted: 06 Jul 2018

Published: 31 Jul 2018

ABSTRACT

Ecocriticism seeks to read texts from the ecological perspective and the practice has gained significance in recent times, especially after the publication of books like Cheryll Glotfelty's The Ecocriticism Reader, Scott Slovic's Seeking Awareness, Jonathan Bate's The Song of the Earth, and Lawrence Buell's The Environmental Imagination amongst many other notable works. Mention must also be made of the contribution of ASLE (Association for the Study of Literature and the Environment) which helped this branch of criticism to expand and become popular. Where other branches of literary criticism primarily focus on man's relationship with the society, eco-criticism focuses on studying man's relationship with the environment. The environment today is a threat. Most literate people are aware that global warming is responsible for the melting of polar ice, which is making the sea level rise, that deforestation leads to an oxygen crisis in the atmosphere, that there is a hole in the ozone layer, etc. But mere awareness has not and will not lead to any corrective measures. Human beings must become more conscious of their place in the ecosphere and understand that environmental pollution, natural calamities and climate changes will affect them sooner or later. Literature can play an effective role in making people conscious by highlighting the connection between them and the environment. Ecocriticism is clear about its purpose, but does not use any proper methodology and that has saved it from being an esoteric branch of criticism. It can hardly be useful by just earning accolades from scholars in a seminar room.

KEYWORDS: Ecocriticism, Urban, Environment, Eliot, Poetry