

## ECOLOGICAL AND MORAL CRISES: A PERSPECTIVE

**Indumathi. A**

Assistant Professor  
Department English  
Kongu Arts and Science College (Autonomous)  
Erode, Tamilnadu, India

Ecological studies in literature focuses on the relationship between human beings and his physical environment. Ecological writing has its roots in the writings of American Transcendentalists namely Ralph Waldo Emerson, Margaret Fuller and Henry David Thoreau. These writers have thrown light on nature and its wilderness. In modern scenario, ecocritics comments about the recent changes occurring in the ecology and its irreparable effect on all the living species. Ecology has gradually turned upside down in the process of growth of human civilization. As a consequence, humans have forgotten their boundary of morality and ethics in interrupting the territories of wild nature.

Ecological imbalance and climatic change are the two crises of prime importance in this technological era. The existential balance in nature is randomly distorted under the mask of development of human progression towards secured and accomplished life. Nature seeks balance and as a sixth sense creature, human beings extend their hands to retain balance in the environment. Thus, the process of balancing and recovering nature is witnessed and perceived in T. Coraghessan Boyle's nature concerned fiction *When the Killing's Done* through two contrasting activists namely Alma Boyd Takesue and Dave La Joy. These two contrasting characters are filled with rage towards their own fellow human beings for the destruction of natural resources. The present life style and moral standards of human beings have been questioned constantly and T. C. Boyle is one among them. The main focus falls on the California environmentalism, the idealization of the natural world by retaining its wilderness without proper ecological standards.

Alma, as a National Park Service biologist invested a lot of effort in protecting the endangered native species of Northern California's Channel Islands such as Anacapa, Santa Barbara and Santa Cruz. Prevention and safeguarding process of endangered animals involves killing of other invasive species like rats and feral pigs. On contrary to this, Dave, the animal rights activist project himself as a defender of all the animal species especially the invading species. Both Alma and Dave altogether try to safeguard the life of animal species at the cost of moral and ethical values.

The project undertaken by Alma to protect endangered species causes merciless killing of other species and captive breeding of endangered one. The controlling agent used in Anacapa to

kill mice brings out internal bleeding within its body and impending death is seen by those innocent creatures whereas in Santa Cruz pigs are shot down by foreign hunters without any compassion for a soul. At this point, humanity and human nature is crushed down by the giant hands of science and technology voluntarily with the aid of humans. As a sixth sense creature, man fails to perceive the pain and agony of other species and in turn this slowly results in the emergence of moral crisis. A portrayal of the extreme use of intellectuality of humans to accomplish their goals is clearly understood. The moral crises of human beings have lead to the ecological crises in the novel. Thus, the question of humanity is placed before the eyes of the readers.

Alma and Dave both believe they are right. And in many ways, both are right only from their own point of view. To some extent, they obeyed the unwritten laws of nature and take steps to protect the environment according to their knowledge. One main thing is that they have vied with nature unknowingly by having pride in their intellectual sense. Both of them strive hard for their ethics and morals but have been defeated before nature, the supreme power of the Universe.

No one in this World can become a creator, neither have rights to create nor destroy the lives of other species in the name of restoration of ecology. Survival capacity is given to all the living species by nature and this novel strictly condemns the intrusion of human beings into the animal world under the cover of redemption. Dave follows his conscience, but he loses perspective and gets lost in the execution of his plans. Alma might be on the right side of the law, but she does not have the authority to rule other animals. This raises moral questions about the environment which is as complicated as the environment itself.

Anthropocentrism is a world view that considers humans to be the most important factor and value in the Universe. Anthropocentric ideas influence Alma to a great extent and this forces her to take decisions in the prevention of ecosystem. In contrast, the biocentric World view considers humans to be no more than a particular species of animal, without greater intrinsic value than any of the other species of organisms that occur on Earth. The ecocentric world view incorporates the biocentric one, while additionally proposing that humans are a natural component of Earth's ecosystem, and that humans have an absolute and undeniable requirement of the products and services of ecosystems in order to sustain themselves and their societies.

Ecocentrism is contrasted with technocentrism in this novel. These two opposing perspectives has contrasting ideals on attitudes towards human technology and its ability to affect, control and even protect the environment. Even though, technology used by Alma is to balance the ecology, it has created many adverse effects on the environment. She fails to understand that animals are conscious and feel pain like every other living thing. She feels herself after some period of time to be the 'killer' of various species. Her Anthropocentric views have made her to lose most of her human nature and forces her to conduct a mass massacre of other living species.

According to biocentrism, all living beings are important and therefore man should not consider himself as a superior being among all the living creatures living on this earth. Men with his sixth sense invented many technologies but the irony is that science has killed more living species than saving more. None of the human being can justify his materialistic wishes rightly because his intellectual pride gets hurt and thus, humans should restrain themselves from activities placed against the perfect harmony of nature.

As Arthur Schopenauer says,

The assumption that animals are without rights and the illusion that our treatment of them has no moral significance is a positively outrageous example of Western crudity and barbarity. Universal compassion is the only guarantee of morality.(129-130)

Thus anthropocentric ideas of humans should be overcome by developing mercy and compassion towards all the living species in the earth. Speciesism, the irrational prejudice of humans over animals must be ended with the formation of green laws according to the emerging trends in ecology and nature. Humans should not intervene into his natural environment in name of rejuvenation, redemption, protection or preservation of ecological sources of this earth. The one and only duty or obligation of Human beings is to live in harmony with all the other living species without depending much on technocentrism.

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