

ISSN
0976-9064

Litscape

JOURNAL OF VUETC

UGC-Approved Peer-Reviewed Refereed Journal of Literature & Culture Studies

V Vidyasagar
U University
E English
T Teachers'
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Special Issue ■ Translation Studies: Theory and Practice



Vol. 10 • No. 1 • November 2017

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UGC-Approved
Peer-Reviewed Refereed Journal of Literature & Culture Studies
(UGC List Serial No. 64751)

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Published by

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ISSN 0976-9064

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Price

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Zoocriticism and Rabindranath Tagore's "The Wife's Letter": An Overview

Bipasha Majumder (De)

Zoocriticism is one of the fastest growing subfields within ecocritical literary studies. According to Aarthi Vadde,

zoocriticism traces its roots to animal studies, a formation that draws on philosophy, zoology, and religion, while ecocriticism is the literary contribution to environmental studies, a field that is also the province of history, anthropology, and geography. ("Cross-Pollination: Ecocriticism, Zoocriticism, Postcolonialism" *Contemporary Literature* 567)

It is concerned with how the relationship between human beings and animals gets reflected in literature. However, it should be noted that zoocriticism is more than simply the study of animals represented in literary works. As Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin have said: "...zoocriticism – as we might term its practice in literary studies – is concerned not just with animal representation but also with animal rights" (*Postcolonial Ecocriticism* 18). It has distinguished itself by the ethical stand it takes and its commitment to the animal community as a significant thing rather than merely as a thematic study. Zoocritics try, by a revisionary reading to bring in to light the writer's biocentric world view reflected in his/her work so that the readers can be aware of the evil consequences of destroying the wild and the savage. Thus zoocriticism is oriented towards heightening the readers' awareness and even towards inciting them to social and political action. It is a means of keeping the human community from destroying the non-human community thus maintaining the ecological balance of the world. Zoocriticism emerged only in the present century and since then a growing amount of scholarship has focused on it. However, it is remarkable that zoocriticism though directed towards specific goals (that is, to protect the non-human community on earth) preserves the aesthetic function of the literary text while drawing the readers' attention to its profound concern for ecological degradation or imminent catastrophe which is the burning issue of the day.

Assistant Professor, Department of English, Debra Thana S.K.S. Mahavidyalaya, Paschim Medinipur, W.B., India

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VUETC is proud to launch the Tenth volume of

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- The next issue is due in November, 2018
- Submission may be made round the year. However, VUETC circulates "Call for Papers" well ahead of publication of the journal.
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Published by The Executive Committee, Vidyasagar University English Teachers' Consortium;
Printed by Shreelipi, Station Road, Midnapore. Ph: 9732754886