

**NARRATIVE SILENCE IN INCENDIARY CIRCUMSTANCES: A RETHINKING OF
ECOCRITICAL EXPECTATIONS THAT PRIVILEGE PRESENCE, VOICE, AND AGENCY**

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Abstract

This paper critically revisits prevailing paradigms of ecocriticism that privilege presence, voice and agency as the main means of ecological representation. It claims that these structures cannot be used to deal with the modern environmental crisis, especially the one that Incendiary Circumstances by Amitav Ghosh illustrates. Ecological catastrophes, climate change, and socio-political upheaval become the flames in these essays, the circumstances of fragmentation, ambiguity, and discontinuity of the story.

The paper is based on the idea of Jacques Derrida, which is known as *différance* and is reconceptualized by the author as a productive site of meaning, instead of as absence or failure. It also interacts with the concept of slow violence by Rob Nixon to show how environmental damage is usually made invisible and suppressed in the narrative. In the context of this, the paper presents a new notion of eco-absence to explain a structural absence and marginalization of nonhuman life in literature and culture.

The paper will apply the theory of structural injustice by Iris Marion Young to ecological settings to demonstrate how nonhuman entities are victims of the systems, which include capitalism and anthropocentrism. It contends that narrative silence and fragmentation are not weaknesses in the work of Ghosh; rather they are representational strategies that mirror the magnitude and the complexity of environmental disasters.

Finally, the paper recommends the reorientation of ecocritical approach to be one that does not rest on the imperative of visibility and articulation but rather adopts silence, absence, and opacity as the main pillars of ecological meaning. This kind of a change would allow a more ethically responsive and theoretically sound approach to the problems of the Anthropocene.

Keywords: Ecocriticism, Narrative Silence, Eco-Absence, Nonhuman Agency, Structural Injustice, Anthropocene

Introduction

Presence, visibility, and agency have long been the key components of environmental reality in literature, which is why ecocriticism as a critical area has traditionally been concerned with such components. Lawrence Buell is among the foundational philosophers who propose that to be environmentally significant, the nonhuman world must be narratively present and ethically visible in a text (Buell, 1995). This focus has also developed in the material ecocriticism, where other scholars such as Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann think of matter itself as an agent and a producer of meaning, even outside of the human language (Iovino and Oppermann, 2014). Although these strategies have gone a long way in ensuring the growth of ecological consciousness, they still operate on the premise that ecological meaning is formed mainly through articulation, representation and narrative presence.

But within the Anthropocene, these assumptions are becoming less and less sufficient. It is important to note that as Dipesh Chakrabarty remarks, climate change acts both in time and space that is beyond human perception and narrative understanding (Chakrabarty, 2009). The ecological crises that are occurring like sea levels, mass extinction, and extreme weather events do not necessarily work well in coherent narrative, but they create fragmentation, opacities, and narrative disorder. The essays in the book *Incendiary Circumstances* by Amitav Ghosh focus on these conditions, which have been the subject of this paper as incendiary circumstances. In his work, Ghosh shows that the environmental disaster usually does not lend itself easily to conventional narrative styles and leaves silences and gaps that push the boundaries of literary representation.

To overcome these shortcomings, this paper relies on the philosophy of Jacques Derrida, especially his critique of the so-called metaphysics of presence, which is concerned with immediacy and full meaning in Western philosophy (Derrida, 1976). According to Derrida, the idea of *différance* implies that meaning is never generated without absence, deferral, and relational gaps, and thus it becomes possible to rethink the notion of silence as a productive and constitutive force as opposed to a lack. It is based on this theoretical approach that ecological silence, particularly in the context of the widespread environmental crisis, can be interpreted as a sensible response to what lies beyond human language and thought.

Moreover, the article plays with the notion of slow violence by Rob Nixon, which refers to environmental destruction as slow, diffuse and even invisible such that it is hard to tell within mainstream discourses (Nixon, 2011). In *Incendiary Circumstances*, this violence can be seen through the repetitive but underrepresented ecological vulnerability, displacement, and loss. These dynamics demonstrate that environmental crises are not merely material destructive but they are also suppressed in narration.

Based on these theoretical foundations, this paper presents a concept of eco-absence, which serves to analyze the structural marginalization or exclusion of nonhuman life in literary and cultural discourse. One example is eco-absence, which builds on narrative theory, specifically the concept of textual gaps, as proposed by Wolfgang Iser (Iser, 1978). The nonhuman agency

is erased or silenced in the work of Ghosh, which represents larger ecological marginalization systems within capitalist modernity and anthropocentric thought.

Finally, this paper will suggest that the plight of burning described by Ghosh requires a radical re-ecocritical practice. Ecocriticism should not be concerned with the dominant modes of ecological representation, but rather voice, presence, and agency; and it should focus on silence, absence, and opacity as the main ones. This strategy not only recognizes the constraints of humanistic discourses but also provides new ethically responsive means of approaching the intricacies of environmental crisis in the Anthropocene.

Literature Review

The recent improvements on ecocriticism are an indication of a major change on the previous nature-oriented models to more complex, interdisciplinary models that challenge the presuppositions of presence, voice, and agency in ecological representation. In its earliest forms, ecocritical models, especially those developed by Lawrence Buell, focused on the need to elicit the nonhuman environment into visible and narrative expression in literature (Buell, 1995). On the one hand, this method was essential in predicting the environmental issues, but on the other hand, it supported a tendency toward human-oriented perception and expression.

Material ecocriticism, in turn, is a reconceptualization of matter as expressive in nature and able to generate meaning outside of linguistic representation, developed by Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann (Iovino and Oppermann, 2014). Their work undermines the notion that narrative agency should be linked with human voice by suggesting a model of distributed agency, where ecological meaning is created through the interactions between human and nonhuman beings. This theoretical change is especially applicable to the interpretation of narrative silence as not absence, but as another way of ecological signification.

Simultaneously, critics like Dipesh Chakrabarty also stressed the epistemological constraints of globalization of climate change, suggesting that its planetary magnitude upsets any traditional historical and narrative context (Chakrabarty, 2009). Equally, the uncertain, negative, and incomprehensible are anticipated by Timothy Morton as the future of ecological thought, and opposes the yearning towards coherent and harmonious images of nature (Morton, 2016). All these views contribute to the inefficiency of traditional narrative types in order to reveal the intricacy of environmental crises.

In the concept of invisibility in environmental discourse, the idea of slow violence developed by Rob Nixon explains how ecological violence is slow, diffusive, and often invisible in mainstream cultural discourses (Nixon, 2011). This framework is essential in comprehending how environmental degradation is narratively repressed, especially where the impacts of environmental degradation are delayed in time or place. In other literary works like *Incendiary Circumstances*, this type of violence is not always explicitly depicted but rather is manifested through fragmentation, omission and silence.

Simultaneously, the narrative theory can offer valuable insights into the role of absence in meaning-making. Wolfgang Iser holds that gaps and indeterminacies are the structures of the text that need the active participation of the reader (Iser, 1978). Application of this concept to ecocriticism, the concept of eco-absence is developed as a means of conceptualizing the systematic exclusion or backgrounding of nonhuman life in literary and cultural discourses. The elision represents more widespread epistemological and cultural prejudices that place human experience above ecological facts.

Further, the ethical and political aspects of ecological marginalization are addressed by examining Val Plumwood who criticizes the hierarchical distinction between human and nonhuman life in Western thought (Plumwood, 2002). Such criticism is also continued by Jason W. Moore, who places the exploitation of the environment in the framework of global capitalism, in which nature is made an expendable resource (Moore, 2015). These views unveil the nonhuman life silencing is not only a narrative problem, but also the outcome of the systemic relations of power.

Further, Ursula K. Heise discusses how biodiversity and extinction discourses render nonhuman life visible and restrict its discourse at the same time (Heise, 2016). This paradox highlights the problem of finding nonhuman existence without making it human-centered. We can find such tensions in the work of Ghosh where the ecological crises are mostly delivered to the reader in the form of narrative fragmentation and obfuscation, as opposed to being directly shown. Collectively these academic works suggest that ecocritical thought has become critically altered in both its focus on presence and voice and on absence, silence and distributed agency. Nevertheless, even with these developments, the role played by narrative silence as an important ecological representation mode has not been sufficiently investigated. This distance is especially important in the case of incendiary situations described in *Incendiary Circumstances*, where environmental crises cannot be coherently narrated, but are expressed in the form of absence, fragmentation, and representational limits. This paper relies on these theoretical premises to explain that silence and eco-absence are not marginal but central to the interpretation of ecological crisis in modern literature, and thus the ecocritical approach needs to be reoriented.

Objectives of the Study

1. To critically explore the weaknesses of ecocritical models that focus on the presence, voice, and agency in depicting ecological crises in *Incendiary Circumstances* by Amitav Ghosh.
2. To redefine narrative silence and eco-absence as significant forms of ecological representation by applying theoretical concepts of Jacques Derrida.
3. To examine the marginalization of nonhuman life structurally using such notions as slow violence (Rob Nixon) and structural injustice (Iris Marion Young).
4. To suggest a re-ecocritical paradigm that prefigures silence, absence, and obscurity as the key to comprehending ecological disasters in the Anthropocene.

Research Gap

In spite of the considerable progress made in the ecocritical theory, the current scholarship remains dominated by presence, voice and agency as the leading means of ecological representation. Although these methods like material ecocriticism have broadened the concept of nonhuman agency, they remain highly reliant on frameworks that presuppose that ecological meaning should be expressed or revealed. Consequently, the place of silence, absence, and narrative gaps has not been sufficiently theorized in the mainstream ecocritical discourse. Though the notion of slow violence developed by Rob Nixon reminds us of the invisibility and insensible character of the environmental damage, it does not provide the complete response to the question of the invisibility functioning at the narrative form level. In the same way, on the one hand, theorists such as Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann focus on the distributed agency, whereas the particular role of eco-absence as a representational strategy is under researched.

Moreover, little critical attention has been paid to the way in which incendiary situations, situations of ecological crisis, characterized by fragmentation, disruption, and representational frontiers, are expressed in literary works like *Incendiary Circumstances* by Amitav Ghosh. Current literature usually dwells on environmental issues in the work of Ghosh, yet it fails to adequately address the role of narrative silence and absence as the major modes of meaning. This work fills in these gaps by preempting silence and eco-absence as important analytical terms, thus helping to establish a more refined and ethically sensitive ecocritical approach that goes beyond anthropocentric demands of representation.

Ecocritical Expectations of Presence

Historically ecocriticism has also stressed the significance of presence as a main parameter to represent environmental issues, and in many cases ecological value is syn Romanticized with the continuum of visibility and narrative of nature. Influential environmental criticism theorists like Lawrence Buell would like to see that a text is environmentally oriented, it must have the nonhuman environment expressed fully and actively present in the narrative (Buell, 1995). This system promotes literature to treat nature as an active and projective agent thus reversing its exclusion in Western ideas. Later accounts of the ecocritical theory have restructured this focus to encompass nonhuman voice and agency especially in material ecocriticism. Such theorists like Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann view matter as storiated, when they propose that the natural world has its own way of expressing itself and narrating (Iovino and Oppermann, 2014). This school of thought takes a firm stand in showing that ecological meaning will develop through articulation, presence and agency, even when applied to nonhumans. Nevertheless, this focus on the presence poses a threat of strengthening an anthropocentric bias since it privileges modes of representation, which align with the human senses and modes of narration. Environmental phenomena like climate change act at scales at which humans can hardly imagine them with, which means that they cannot realistically be enclosed by the narrative structures (Chakrabarty, 2009). Therefore, the demand of presence can lose sight of

ecological realities that are expressed as absence, invisibility, or silence and requires a critical re-assessment of ecocritical demands.

Derridean Silence and Absence

This philosophy is based on Jacques Derrida as it offers a significant theoretical framework of reevaluating silence and absence as the theme in ecocritical discourse. Derrida (1976) criticizes the Western metaphysical tradition of emphasis on presence, immediacy, and full meaning in *Of Grammatology* and puts forward a different approach according to which meaning is always produced through *différance*, which means a deferral and relational absence. This structure suggests that absence or things not said are not peripheral but make up meaning in itself. Silence is thus not nothingness but rather fruitful and an essential state of interpretation. The reconfiguration of the understanding of ecological stories with the application of Derrida on the ecocriticism can be achieved. Instead of seeing the lack of nonhuman voice or presence as a failure of representation, it can be possible to understand such absences as a trace of the nonlinguistic capture. The environmental phenomena, especially when it comes to large-scale crisis, such as climate change or extinction, are usually not expressible directly showing the shortcomings of words and narrative sense. Silence, in this regard, is the demarcation between the things which may be written about and the things which are irreducibly complex or unknown. Further, the notion of ecocritical demands on voice and agency that Derrida criticizes as the metaphysics of presence reveals ways such insistence can potentially replicate the anthropocentric premise. Such ways of privileging the visible and the speakable will have a negative impact on the forms of ecological existence that cannot be perceived by humans. Seeing silence as a location of meaning and resistance, therefore, allows a more critical approach towards the ecological absence, where silence is as much as speech (Derrida, 1976).

Narrative Gaps / Eco-Absence Theory

The importance of gaps, omissions, and indeterminacies as constituents of forming meaning in a text has been long-known in narrative theory. Literary works according to Wolfgang Iser are organized around blank and blank necessitate the reader in the construction of meaning where the absence is part of the narrative (Iser, 1978). To apply the same insight to ecocriticism, the notion of eco-absence is generated as a critical conceptualization of how ecological aspects are usually ignored, neglected or backgrounded when represented in the literary and cultural work of representation. Eco-absence does not merely refer to the absence of the environment but refers to a structural position of invisibility, wherein nonhuman life becomes either undisseen or unimportant either by dominant narrative forms or both. This omission is an indication of the larger epistemological and cultural discriminations that give priority to human experience to the expense of ecological facts. In this regard, what is not portrayed gets to be as significant as what is stated directly and this is a revelation that portrays the human anthropocentric narration. This framework is complicated further by material ecocriticism, which describes that matter has an ecological sense of distributed narrativity even without human language (Iovino

& Oppermann, 2014). In this sense, eco-absence is not an absolute disappearance, but a change in narrative modality, entirely existent beyond direct expression as ecological meaning. Therefore, the eco-absence theory plays with the old ecocritical expectations because it provides the necessary prefiguration of silence, invisibility, and narrative gaps as the only means of comprehending environmental discourse in the situations where ecological problems are inalienable to the traditional kinds of storytelling.

Nature as Politically Unmentionable

In the modern ecological rhetoric, nature has become politically inappropriate, especially when multiple environmental destruction is directly connected to the structures of power, such as capitalism, industrialization, and state politics. Such unmentionability does not mean complete absence but on the contrary, a strategic silence or push to the periphery of ecological issues in the social and narrative context. Slow violence in the arguments put forward by Rob Nixon means that, often environmental degradation is carried out in such a way that it is scattered over time and space, and thus is hard to symbolize, and thus appears straightforward to deny the representation of in mainstream political and cultural discourses (Nixon, 2011). This invisibility is in many cases supported by the interests of politics and economy that are satisfied with the background conditions of facing the ecological problems, not as the foreground crisis. Much of the literature on environmental destruction has often been described as an unavoidable side effect of development, thus making it discursively silenced or silent. In these cases, the nature does not go away completely, but is rather placed in a manner that restricts its ability to displace the mainstream discourses of progress and development. Moreover, the political unmentionability of nature is connected with the problem of imposition of planetary issues on the human-oriented political thinking, which is discussed by Dipesh Chakrabarty (Chakrabarty, 2009). The scales of climate change and ecological crisis are also beyond the traditional systems, which makes them not entirely civicized. In this way, silence of nature is not just a narrative, but political state of affairs, in which ecological realities are structurally silenced, postponed, or silenced, which submits again the necessity to view silence as a significant and important ecological signifier.

Silence as Representation

Silence, which is usually seen as an absence of expression or failure to express, may actually be an effective form of representation especially in ecological and crisis stories. In the situation when the destruction of the environment is above the power of language, silence, rather than a lack, is actually a signal of what cannot be fully expressed. As Susan Sontag hints in the consideration about trauma, some pain is not easily represented and the silence is a possible method of acceptance of the restrictions of the narrative and visual mediation (Sontag, 2003). This insight applies particularly in ecocritical scenarios in which the traditional stories about extinction, global warming, and environmental destruction are hard to tell. In theory terms, silence can be as well explained in the logic of Jacques Derrida, critic of presence that disorients

the belief that meaning is based on unambiguous expression (Derrida, 1976). This sense of silence is therefore not empty but forms part of meaning defining what can be known or can be said. This can take the form of gaps, omissions or unresolved tensions in ecological narratives which indicate the existence of nonhuman forces or losses that can be understood beyond human understanding. In addition, silence could work as an ethical resistance, lack of the need to appropriate or simplify complicated ecological realities into human-focused models. Refusing voice, the narratives can oppose the temptation to anthropomorphize nonhuman life, remaining in its otherness and vagueness. Therefore, silence becomes a representational tactic that would not only uncover but also acknowledge human insight boundaries to provide a subtler treatment of ecological narrative.

Narrative Silencing of Nonhuman Life

Nonhuman life is still an ongoing problem of the narrative silencing in literary and other forms of cultural expression as the nature is often minimized and seen as an inert background instead of having a role in activity. Nonhuman actors are not given autonomous voice, point of view, agency, which contributes to their marginal position even in ecocritical models, which aim to anticipate nature. According to Ursula K. Heise, the processes of creating biodiversity and extinction stereotypes are known to make nonhuman life visible and at the same time constrain its narrative value, which is typically filtered through human anxieties and analytical systems (Heise, 2016). This silencing is not only a formal problem but an indication of other anthropocentric predispositions in narrative frameworks. Plots are usually structured around human experiences, intentions and conflicts and there remains little space within them of non human forms of being that do not fit in the pattern. Consequently animals, ecosystems and material processes are often represented and not permitted to speak with their functions being restricted to instrumental or symbolic functions. Besides, the effort to give a voice to nonhuman are in or can be paradoxical in entrenching the silencing of nonhuman beings since it is usually anthropomorphic, the translation of nonhuman experience into human language, and, by definition, the erosion of nonhuman specificity. According to the viewpoint of material ecocriticism, developed by such scholars as Serenella Iovino and Serpil Oppermann, the nonhuman agency is of a distributed, non-linguistic nature that cannot be conveyed in the traditional narrative format (Iovino and Oppermann, 2014). In such a way, narrative silencing cannot be merely judged as absence but rather as a system constraint of presentation in which the nonhuman life has continued to be marginalized in the mainstream regimes of narration.

Nonhuman as Structural Victim

To comprehend nonhuman life as a structural victim it is important to refocus the concentration on individual incidences of harming the environment to the systemic circumstances which generate the ecological degradation. Instead of being influenced by individual and namesake agents, nonhuman beings -animals, ecosystems, material surroundings- are integrated into chains of capitalist extraction, industrial growth and anthropocentric control, which produce

predation at the scale. With the slow violence, Rob Nixon suggests that environmental destruction is frequently not thorough, not concentrated but wide-spread and untraceable and as such the victims of the destruction in this scenario, in particular, nonhuman ones, are mostly invisible and unknown (Nixon, 2011). Such view fits in the theory of structural injustice presented by Iris Marion Young where the wrong is in the social and institutional processes, but not in an individual (Young, 2011). Applied to ecological scales, this framework shows the extent to which the nonhuman life turns into a diffuse victim of systematic forces, unable to be represented and expected to be redressed. The extinction of the environment is then hegemonized within the economies and developmental lines of thought, which obliterates the magnitude and effect of the nonhuman suffering. Additionally, authors, such as Jason W. Moore, make it clear that capitalism structures nature as an expendable and cheap resource, something that ingrains even deeper and exposes capitalism to structural vulnerability (Moore, 2015). In these systems, not only is the nonhuman life exploited, and gained the status of a silent victim, but it is also made invisible narrative- and politically-wise, therefore, strengthening its victimization. The acknowledgment of nonhuman beings as structural victims highlights the necessity to reconsider the notion of ethical responsibility as well as narrative representation to go beyond the individualistic paradigm and have a more ecological sense of ecological injustice.

Structural Injustice (Young) Extended to Ecology

Iris Marion Young has developed the concept of structural injustice that offers an important perspective on the issue of environmental damage outside the domain of individual responsibility. According to Young (2011), the injustice is not a singular act but a systematic process, located in the social, economic, and political institutions. By applying this framework to ecological situations, we can see the way environmental erosion is generated via diffuse mechanisms of power, in this case global capitalism, industrial production and consumption patterns. The nonhuman life gets caught up in these systems and gets harmed without any obvious offenders. Structural injustice resorts to collective responsibility, which is a characteristic of conventional models of justice that are based on blame and accountability, and all parties in a system are related either directly or indirectly to detrimental effects. This is especially applicable in the context of environmental crises like climate change whereby the responsibility of certain actions is shared between countries, sectors and even individuals, but the burden of these effects is disproportionately experienced by the ecosystems and species that are vulnerable. Here nonhuman life presents itself as an unrepresented and silent victim without political or legal representation. Lack of obvious perpetrators of harm also contributes to the even stronger struggle to overcome ecological injustice and serves as the force of denial and apathy. The implementation of the ecocritical approach using the Young theoretical framework allows developing the narrative silence as the spread of responsibility of the environmental system and thus associating literature absence with the wider systems of ecological destruction.

Narrative Absence Mirroring Political Absence

The lack of nonhuman life in the narrative forms tends to reflect the lack of it in political and institution-related structures, pointing to the profound correlation between representation and power. Nonhuman animals, forests, oceans, etc. have a vague standing in law or even political agency and this leads to systematic exclusion when making decisions. This political stigmatization finds its appreciation in literary and cultural discourses in which nature is often relegated, disclosed or made passive. According to Rob Nixon, people usually render environmental degradation invisible, using patterns of the narrative to conceal its magnitude and effects (Nixon, 2011). This invisibility does not happen by chance but rather it is within the political organization that accentuates more on human interests and economic developments compared to the ecological sustainability. Therefore, narrative absence is a cultural symptom of political marginalization that further promotes the marginal position of non-human life. In addition, invisibility through narrative lack of representation is a factor that leads to another round of invisibility, as the unnarrated part cannot be identified or dealt with. It is in this dynamic where the issue of absence is most effectively discussed not in terms of a feature of literature in itself but as a manifestation of some wider power relations. Realizing the correlation between narrative silence and political absence, ecocriticism can render more service to explaining how representation affects moral and political activity in the environment, and more encompassing structures should be introduced that take nonhuman existence into consideration.

Ethical Invisibility of Nonhuman Life

Ethical invisibility of nonhuman life is also a major issue in ecological philosophy, which is the manner in which nature is not to be treated as a moral entity in mainstream philosophical and cultural contexts. Western traditions, as Val Plumwood points out, have traditionally installed a strict hierarchy between human and nonhuman worlds and placed nature as the lesser, instrumental and value-less world (Plumwood, 2002). This dichotomous thought makes the life of the nonhumans morally invisible so that it can be exploited without taking into consideration ethical considerations. This invisibility is further strengthened in such a way as to take an alternative to marginalize or omit nonhuman voices, and thus prohibit their ability to be taken as subjects of ethical concern. When the environmental issues are mattered, they are framed either according to the human gain or human survival at the expense of the nonhuman existence. Besides that, the moral marginalization of nature is also directly related to regimes of power like capitalism, which considers the environment as a resource that can be used and devoured (Moore, 2015). In this context, the nonhuman life is appreciated in terms of the utility, but not its own value. Resolving this ethical invisibility will demand a radical change of mindset, one in that it acknowledges nonhuman participants in an ecological community. Through ecocriticism, which foregrounds the absence and silence, we would begin to see the level of this invisibility and would be able to frustrate the assumptions that maintain the invisibility.

Systematic Marginalization

Nonhuman marginalization is not an accidental event but a planned phenomenon and it is ingrained in cultural, economic and epistemological frameworks which serve to uphold the interests of humans. This marginalization takes place on a variety of scales, such as narrative representation, policy making and economic structure as well as a broader structure in which nature is constantly subordinated. Capitalism, according to Jason W. Moore, operates through the means of pushing nature into a background condition so that it could be exploited without paying much attention to its contribution to life on Earth (Moore, 2015). In the literary narratives, such marginalization is understood as the natural world is degraded to setting or resource instead of being considered as a dynamic force. The illustrations of such representations produce the effect that the nonhuman life is secondary to the concerns of humanity, thus making the exclusion of it a matter of normalcy. Also, anthropocentric epistemological models constrain the modes of ecological knowledge production and comprehension. Nonhuman forms of agency and being tend to be overlooked in the mainstream ways of thinking thereby establishing their marginal position. Such a systematic marginalization is a self-reinforcing phenomenon, since the lack of nonhuman voices in the discourse generates the further marginalization of these voices to non-ethical and non-political reflection. It is important to acknowledge this trend to create ecocritical methodology that will be more inclusive and disruptive towards the frameworks perpetrating ecological inequality.

Eco-Negativity / Absence Studies

Ecocritical theory has recently expanded its questioning into the eco-negativity, eco-absence studies which concern the subject of loss, extinction, and ecological deterioration. These approaches instead of focusing on peaceful coexistence with nature face the inescapable destruction and insecurity of the Anthropocene. According to Timothy Morton, the ecological consciousness should take notice of the strangeness, negativity, and discomfort of environmental crises (Morton, 2016). The eco-negativity diverts the focus of presence and vitality to absence, disappearance and decay, which is identified as a core aspect in the modern ecological experience. This view fits the idea of narrative silence since they both focus on what does not exist or cannot be portrayed instead of what is evident. What is more, absence studies help emphasize the role of mourning and loss in ecological thinking especially in the context of mass extinction and biodiversity loss. The scale and complexity of these processes, which make them difficult to represent, reinforce the importance of silence as an important response. Through eco-negativity ecocriticism can cease to be dominated by idealized portrayals of nature and also has an opportunity of focusing on the realities of environmental crisis. This methodology emphasizes the necessity to take absence as a site rather than lack of something and it is a fundamental site of ecological meaning, with boundaries available to human knowledge.

Limits of Human-Centered Climate Discourse

Climate discourse is still mostly human because it is concerned with how environmental change will affect human societies, and in many cases, nonhuman perspectives are ignored. Climate change, as Dipesh Chakrabarty believes, challenges the fundamentals of human centered thinking since it is based on planetary scales that are beyond what human experience and understanding comprehend (Chakrabarty, 2009). This poses a fundamental restrictive operation of representation and perception of ecological crises. Man-focused stories are more likely to focus on the problems of economic loss, displacement and survival and, therefore, negate the nonhuman existence forms that are equally vulnerable to the change of environment. Such an imbalance supports an anthropocentric system that constrains the extent of moral and political practices. In addition, there is the difficulty in the complexity of climate systems to represent them in the traditional narrative patterns of simplification, fragmentation and the silence. This leads to the fact that much of ecological reality cannot be articulated. To overcome these shortcomings, there is a need to move towards more inclusive systems that acknowledge the interrelations between human existence and nonhuman existence. Ecocriticism can address the limitations of the anthropocentric discourse to grasp the elusiveness and magnitude of ecological processes providing new avenues of comprehending environmental crisis.

Backgrounded Ecological Victims

The ecological victims tend to be placed into the background of the narrative and the discourse, their ecological anguish remaining invisible with the help of spatial, temporal, and representational distancing. The concept of slow violence as Rob Nixon describes it suggests that environmental degradation often happens in a slow and unnoticeable manner and thus is hard to notice and image (Nixon, 2011). This invisibility has a disproportionate impact on nonhuman life, which does not have the resources to declare its existence in the dominant discourses. The victim of nonhumans, whether it is an endangered species, a degraded ecosystem, etc, are often considered second to human interests, and their losses are rarely in any way recognized unless to the extent that they affect human happiness. This leads to certain representational injustice when ecological suffering is reduced or set aside. Also, environmental destruction on a temporal level tends to be more than the human ability to pay attention creating an additional factor of ecological harm backgrounding. Narratives like slow loss of habitats or climate change simply do not feature as a category of event with the immediacy necessary to attract narrative attention as such. It is important to identify these dynamics in order to explain how these narrative structures lead to ecological invisibility. Through predicting historicizing victims, the ecocriticism has the ability to oppose prevailing modes of representation and demonstrate the ethical urgency of ecological crisis.

Justice for Nonhuman Life

It demands basic reconsideration of ethical principles and narrative form in order to obtain justice on the nonhuman life. Conventional justice methods are based on the ideas of agency,

voice, and representation, which do not always address nonhuman actors who fail to match such specifications. Consequently, life beyond human has continued to be kept at the periphery, where it is not institutionalized in political, legal, or even cultural institutions. With reference to the works of Iris Marion Young, justice should be perceived not solely in regards to individual causality, but also concerning the structural procedures that cause harm (Young, 2011). This worldview underscores that there is a necessity to act together and change the system in order to combat ecological injustice. Meanwhile, ecocriticism needs to transcend its ardent focus on presence and voice in order to accept silence, absence and opacity as appropriate forms of representation. Timothy Morton suggests that the solution to addressing the ecological crisis can be found in confronting uncertainty and negativity instead of finding any cozy stories (Morton, 2016). The awareness of the importance of narrative silence allows one to admit the limitations of human knowledge and overcome the barriers to speak about the moral aspect of ecological damage. Justice to nonhuman life can therefore be seen as not only the act of giving voice but also to learn to read silence that what is not said is not neglected but must be taken as an imperative aspect of ecological reality.

Conclusion

The overriding assumptions in ecocriticism that have been critically analyzed in this paper are that prominence, voice, and agency are the key ways of ecological representation. Although these frameworks have long been relevant in the context of introducing environmental issues into the literary and cultural narrative, they are still too limited to respond to the complexity of the current ecological disasters. In environmental disaster such disasters as this terms incendiary circumstances, the narratives often disintegrate and create silence, absence, and fragmentation instead of intelligent articulation. These aspects ought not to be seen as lapses in representation but rather as a relevant reaction to the constraints of words, senses, and anthropocentric thinking. Based on the philosophical proposals of Jacques Derrida, this paper has established that absence and silence is not bare, but as constitutive of meaning, and effective in the perception of ecological realities. In a similar tone, the narrative theory, and in particular the works of Wolfgang Iser, indicate the necessity of gaps and omissions through which interpretation occurs and the readers get a chance to interact with what is not clearly presented. However, these views, when applied to ecocriticism, lead to the emergence of a new perspective of the eco-absence, in which the exclusion or marginalization of nonhuman life becomes an object of analysis and not a constraint.

It has also demonstrated that the narrative silencing of nonhuman life is seen to be a projection of larger frameworks of political and ethical disengagement. Slow violence is usually so unrepresentable, dispersed, gradual that, as the idea of slow violence proposed by Rob Nixon shows, causes the invisibility of ecological victims. This invisibility is also supported by the forces of the system like capitalism which, according to Jason W. Moore, places the concept of nature in the background as a resource thus eliding its agency and value. The theory of structural injustice by Iris Marion Young which is applied in demonstrating how this harm is

made by diffuse and interconnected systems underscores the fact that nonhuman life is an invisible and victimless target of world processes. Moreover, this paper has proposed the significance of eco-negativity and absence studies especially the work of Timothy Morton which prefigures loss, extinction and uncertainty as the central component of ecological thinking. These practices strain the quest of harmonious or entirely realized depiction of nature by making a claim in favor of an activity of perplexity, obscurity and unease. Thus, they concur with an argument that silence is not a mere absence but a requisite form of environmental storytelling particularly in the context of a phenomenon beyond the human understanding, e.g. the climate change and massive extinction.

The paper concludes by recommending a reorientation of the ecocritical approach, which should no longer lay emphasis on the voice and presence to adopt silence, absence, and distributed agency. The result of such a shift is the ability to respond with finer degrees of ethically responsiveness to the phenomenon of environmental crisis, being aware that not every way of being can or must be fully expressed in the context of human storytelling. The concept of nonhuman life as well as justice is based not merely upon determining how to make visible or audible the life but also knowing how to interpret and value what has not been spoken. This paper seeks to rethink the possibilities of approaching the problem of the Anthropocene through the critical ecological mode of foregrounding narrative silence, which offers a wide range of possibilities in addressing the long-standing, largely unspoken, and ecologically ambiguous truths on the ecological mode of existence.

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