

ABSTRACT

The broad area of the research relates to American literature and Ecocriticism. The current planetary ecological crises have reached a magnitude beyond human understanding, and there is an urgent need to halt this global environmental decimation by humans. Habitat fragmentation, species extinction, global warming, dumping of radioactive waste, toxic chemicals, and depletion of local ecosystems are some of the issues of immediate concern.

The study concentrates on interpreting and analysing Barbara Kingsolver's works within the ecocritical context. Barbara Kingsolver is an eminent novelist, trained biologist, and environmentalist. Close readings of her fiction and non-fiction provide an in-depth insight into the various aspects of her novels that account for her engagement with seeing the wholeness of the world. Kingsolver's works exhibit an understanding that the human and the nonhuman interact and intersect in a meaningful way. Ecocriticism tends to analyse this relationship between humans and the physical environment represented in literature. The writings of Kingsolver posit her as a versatile writer exploring issues related to persistent ecological and environmental issues. Thus, an ecocritical lens is useful in analysing the literary works of Kingsolver.

The study attempts to examine her four novels, namely *Animal Dreams* (1990), *The Poisonwood Bible* (1998), *Prodigal Summer* (2000), *Flight Behaviour* (2012), and four works of non-fiction, namely *High Tide in Tucson* (1995), *Small Wonder* (2002), *Last Stand: America's Virgin Lands*, with photographer Annie

Griffiths Belt (2002), *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life* (2007) through an ecocritical perspective. Kingsolver, in these works, has discussed environmental awareness by depicting multiple pressing ecological issues. She informs the readers that human beings are neither dominant nor exclusive to this fragile ecosystem. This study proposes to analyse the predominant ecocritical themes in these literary pieces that emphasize the interconnectedness of all life forms. It is imperative that humans understand their relationship with other life forms on this planet, and this is often claimed as one of the important tenets of ecocriticism. The core chapters are analyses based on four specific centers of interest or perspectives. These are (i) Place: Bioregionalism and Eco-cosmopolitanism (ii) Ecofeminism: Partnership Ethics, (iii) Writing Animals: Ecocritical Animal Studies, (iv) the Anthropocene.

Key Words: Ecocriticism, Environmental Humanities, Barbara Kingsolver, Partnership Ethics, Eco-cosmopolitanism, Ecocritical Animal Studies, Anthropocene.