

# *Chapter I*

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

The term environment means the physical atmosphere or surrounding which is the habitat of all living beings. Interrelation of organisms and their physical environment in a biological community is called ecology. The primary concept of ecology is that everything is dependent on one another. Ecocriticism analyses the interrelationship between human life and environment through literature and its theoretical approaches which emphasizes such practices. Ecocriticism is a new critical theory employed to analyze from an interdisciplinary perspective in which all the branches of science are brought together to bring about a possible solution for the current ecological devastation. The ecological devastation challenges the society and mankind to think about their sustainability. Ecocriticism plays an important role in creating awareness regarding the current environmental crisis and in instilling social responsibility in the individuals concerning the protection of mother earth from further pollution.

Nature is no more an unrevealed and irrepressible wild force as most of the earth has become a man-made environment. The atmosphere is altered by excessive exploitation of natural resources leading to pollution. Edward O. Wilson in *The Diversity of Life*, explains that around 27,000 varieties of species go extinct each year. He reveals a saddening truth that if this continues, then twenty percent of the species of both flora and fauna would get extinct in the next thirty years.

Ecocriticism has a broad array of critical concerns ranging from political issues to spiritual connection. “Although ecocriticism can touch virtually any discipline, when it

translates into action, it generally comes back to its home ground – the human relationship with the earth” (Dean 6). The term ecocriticism in Greek means ‘oikos’ and ‘kritis’. ‘oikos’ refers to house, in a broader sense, the environment and ‘kritis’ refers to judge. Together they convey the criticism of the environment which is represented in literature. “...criticism judges the quality and integrity of works and promotes their dissemination” (Glotfelty 71). British writers address ‘ecocriticism’ as ‘green studies’. It was founded by Jonathan Bate who is the author of the book *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition* (1991). The preferred term is ‘ecocriticism’ but the term ‘green studies’ is used often used by British writers.

William Rueckert was the one who coined the term ecocriticism in his essay “Literature and Ecology: An Experiment in Ecocriticism”. He states, “Application of ecology and ecological concepts to the study of literature, because ecology has the greatest relevance to the present and future of the world we all live” (107). The term ecology was first used by Ernst Heinrich Haeckel, a German biologist and philosopher in the year 1876. Ecology is the derivative of the German term ‘Oecologie’ which means, “The branch of biology that deals with the relationships between living organisms and their environment” (Johnston 193).

The growth of environmental literary studies began with Frederick O. Waage’s essay titled, “Teaching Environmental Literature: Material, Methods, Resources”. The essay consists of the course description of the environmental concerns and created awareness in literary genre. In the year 1989, Alicia Nitecki established, “The American Nature Writing Newsletter” with the motive to publish essays and book reviews related to environment. In 1991, Modern Language Association, MLA special session was organized by Harold

Fromm in the annual literary conference entitled “Ecocriticism: The Greening of Literary Studies”. This paved way for the establishment of ASLE. In 1992, Cheryll Glotfelty found ASLE, Association for the Study of Literature and Environment along with Harold Fromm. The association (ASLE) was able to add more than three hundred members within a year. In 1995, the members exceeded up to seven fifty and the association conducted its first conference and established their own journal ISLE, Interdisciplinary Studies of Literature and Environment. ASLE provides interdisciplinary platform to study nature and culture through the array of works such as nature writing, poetry and creative writing. ASLE caters to exchange information and ideas concerning to literature which considers the relationship between environment and human beings.

Cheryll Burgess Glotfelty and Harold Fromm were the forerunners of Ecocriticism. Cheryll Glotfelty and Harold Fromm’s *The Ecocriticism Reader: Landmarks in Literary Ecology* created a great impact during 1990s. Cheryll is addressed as the founder of ecocriticism in the United States of America. Being the founder of ecocritical literary theory, Cheryll states,

Simply put, ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment. Just as feminist criticism examines language and literature from a gender conscious perspective, and Marxist criticism brings an awareness of modes of production and economic class to its reading of texts, ecocriticism takes an earth-centred approach to literary studies. (xviii)

In *The Ecocriticism Reader*, Glotfelty focuses on the critical approach rather than writing about nature. Ecocriticism broadens its spectrum to other genres apart from nature

writing as the literary works analyses ecological issues. Glotfelty opines, "...nature per se is not the only focus of eco-critical studies of representation. Other topics include the frontier, animals, cities, specific geographical regions, rivers, mountains, deserts, Indians, technology, garbage, and the body" (xxiii).

Lawrence Buell, a pioneer of ecocriticism works in Havard University as Professor of American Literature Emirates. In *The Environmental Imagination*, Buell modulates primary concepts of literary criticism from an ecocentric standpoint. He analyses a literary text from an environmental standpoint based on the author's representation, settings, characterization and personae of the work. Buell defines ecocriticism as "The environmentally oriented study of literature and (less often) the arts more generally, and to the theories that underlie such critical practice" (138).

Ecocriticism has widened its genre from the initial stage of nature writing represented in poetry to fiction, drama, documentary and films. As Richard Kerridge says, "The ecocritics want to track environmental ideas and representations wherever they appear, to see more clearly a debate which seems to be taking place, often part-concealed, in a great many cultural spaces. Most of all ecocriticism seeks to evaluate texts and ideas in terms of their coherence and usefulness as responses to environmental crisis" (5).

The field of ecocriticism is very extensive as it does not rely on one particular literary genre. Other than Cheryll Glotfelty and Lawrence Buell, there are many other writers worldwide such as Simon C. Estok, Michael P. Branch and Glen A. Love who have equally contributed towards ecocriticism to bring about a change in the society regarding environmental concern. Glen A. Love is a Professor at the University of

Oregon. He has published many ecocritical essays on literature and environment thus bringing an interdisciplinary understanding between humanities and natural science. In the book *Practical Ecocriticism: Literature, Biology, and the Environment*, Glen raises question regarding the connection between humanity and ecocriticism. He says that human behavior is strongly connected with culture. “Human behavior is not an empty vessel whose only input will be that provided by culture, but is strongly influenced by genetic orientations that underlie and modify, or are modified by cultural influences” (Love 3). Through literature, exploitation of nature can be brought out through human representation, animals or other creatures and landscapes. Glen A. Love states,

What is emerging is a multiplicity of approaches and subjects, including- under the big tent of environmental literature – nature writing, deep ecology, the ecology of cities, ecofeminism, the literature of toxicity, environmental justice, bioregionalism, the lives of animals, the revaluation of place, interdisciplinarity, eco-theory, the expansion of the canon to include previously unheard voices, and the reinterpretation of canonical works from the past. (5)

Apart from theorists and critics, the contribution of novelists plays a major role to take the ecological concern to public and make them understand the seriousness of the problem. In the early stage, writers like William Bartram and Alexander Wilson introduced the ecological thinking through their works. In the nineteenth century British poets tried to revive the unknown wonder of the earth and they attempted to establish a relationship between literature and nature. According to them, nature was the primary means to attain spiritual enlightenment. Emotional depiction of natural world is seen in poems of William

Wordsworth, Coleridge, John Keats, Lord Byron and P.B. Shelley. Wordsworth's "Michael", depicts the life of a shepherd who is deeply connected with the natural world around him. Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" is a lyrical poem that describes nature. Nature was the dominant theme for these romantic poets. Later the works of T.S. Eliot and Thomas Hardy depicted environmental degradation. Their works portrayed how the industrialization annihilated the rural landscapes. Thomas Hardy's poems depict man's destruction of natural wealth. Hardy's "The Darkling Thrush" describes about the dreary and bleak winter landscape. "The Wasteland" by T.S. Eliot shows the destruction of nature caused by the industrial society.

The three major American writers whose works depicts nature as a force of life are Emerson, Margaret Fuller and Thoreau. They were the members of the New England writers, poets and novelists who are jointly addressed as transcendentalists. Transcendentalism was the first literary movement started to attain cultural independence from the European models. The ultimate theme of transcendentalism is that the human experience can be learned only through the harmony with nature. Emerson had applied nontraditional approach towards nature known as transcendentalism in his essay, "Nature". Margaret Fuller in his transcendental travelogue named "Summer on the Lake During 1843", had written about the American landscape. Thoreau's autobiography "Walden" is about his long stay in a hut near Walden Pond.

Edward Abbey brings in the idea of conservation of desert ecosystem through his novel *Desert Solitaire*. The poem "Pilgrim at Tinker Creek" by Annie Dillard is about the interrelationship between man and the natural world. In 1974, Gary Snyder published *Turtle Island*, a volume book of poetry depicts ecocritical degradation involving various

aspects such as political, social, cultural and spiritual level. Barry Lopez's *Arctic Dreams* is a non-fiction published in 1986. Barry Lopez highlighted the importance of the place Arctic and warns about the exploitation done there. Modern writers like Arundhati Roy, Margaret Atwood, Alice Walker, Amitav Ghosh and Toni Morrison have written works that depicts environmental degradation.

The contribution of conservationists in the field of ecocriticism is of considerable importance. Aldo Leopold's non-fiction, *Game Management* is about flora, fauna, ecology, agriculture and forestry. He makes the reader understand the mechanism of nature: interdependence of one another. Rachel Louise Carson was a trained American Marine biologist, author and conservationist who formulated global environmental movement. Some of her works are *The Sea Around Us*, *The Edge of the Sea* and *Silent Spring*. Her writings are acknowledged as a part of the worldwide environmental movement. Her book *Silent Spring* has revealed the health hazards caused by the uses of pesticides in agriculture. Tim Flannery is a conservationist and a scientist who has published many scientific papers and book. His notable non-fictions are *The Future Eaters* and *The Weather Makers*. He is a director of the Australian Conservancy and he is one of the board members in World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) International. Arthur Carhart was the U.S. Forest Service officer who had contributed a lot in wilderness protection.

The interdisciplinary aspect of ecocriticism also includes culture. Karl Kroeber in *Ecological Literary Criticism: Romantic Imagining and the Biology of Mind*, clearly describes the interrelationship between culture and biodiversity.

An ecologically oriented criticism directs itself to understanding persistent romantic struggles to articulate meaningful human relations within the



conditions of a natural world in which transcendence is not an issue...

Ecologically oriented criticism thus recognizes a foreshadowing of its own understanding of humanity's relation to nature in the romantic view that it is natural for human beings to be self-conscious, and natural, therefore, to construct their cultures out of complexly inter-assimilative engagements with their physical and biological environment. (38-39)

Glen A. Love perceives ecocriticism as "...inter connections between the material world and human culture, specifically the cultural artifacts language and literature" (203). Cheryll Glotfelty brings in the relationship between nature and culture. She views ecocriticism as,

Despite the broad scope of inquiry and disparate levels of sophistication, an ecological criticism shares the fundamental premise that human culture is connected to the physical world, affecting it and affected by it. Ecocriticism takes as its subject the interconnections between nature and culture.

Understanding how nature and culture constantly influence and construct each other is essential to an informed ecocriticism. As a critical stance, it has one foot in literature and the other on land. As a theoretical discourse, it negotiates between the human and the nonhuman. (xix)

Ecocriticism stands as a medium to make people understand their relationship with nature especially in the epoch of environmental destruction. "Ecocriticism elucidates relationship between human and non-human nature, privileging literary inscriptions of those relationships for all the usual reasons why we in this profession privilege literature" (Crockett 1). Ecocritics focus on the landscape and the relationship that author or the

characters have towards land and their surroundings. “Ecocriticism is most appropriately applied to a work in which the landscape itself is a dominant character, when a significant interaction occurs between author and place, character(s) and place. Landscape by definition includes the non-human elements of place—the rocks, soil, trees, plants, rivers, animals, air as well as human perceptions and modifications” (Scheese 1).

In most of the indigenous societies, land is considered as a sacred one. Indigenous culture and the physical environment are interlinked. Indigenous people conserve nature through their cultural practices like oral narratives, folklore, ritual practices which aid a spiritual relationship between man and nature. Native Americans lead a nature oriented life. Their cultural practices play a vital role in conservation of ecology.

Thousands of years ago, during ice age, humans travelled from Asia to Alaska. Then the west coast of North America was explored. During 1000 BC they occupied the entire continent and converted into a habitable one. The exact period of the arrival of First People to America is unknown. Anthropologists believe that they might have arrived about 12000 BC. Over these years, Native Americans migrated from one place to another around North America and formed broad range of languages, customs and community. There were many tribal people in America ranging from nations like Europe, Asia and Africa. As the ice age ended, the population increased and the Native Americans experimented with new crops and a few tribes became skilled farmers. Tribes of Mexico cultivated corn and squash. They relied on turkeys, llamas and guinea pigs for food and they hunted deer and bison. The coastal tribes used various methods to catch fish and hunt sea mammals. After 2000 BC, Native Americans formed states consisting of thousands of people and each state was governed by a leader. Trade routes were made across the continents and

cargo rafts and boats were designed to transport goods. Animals were used to carry goods on lands. Though the tribal people are of different group, everyone unanimously believed in myth creation story. “This myth decreed that life emerged from the interior of the earth. The earth resembled the womb of a mother in which she nurtured life. This shared belief in the birth of their existence is what connected them and their way of life with the landscape” (Martin 3). Their beliefs merged with their cultural practices and rituals. As Schwing aptly says, “This common belief in the creation story extended to a shared perspective on the world; that it was a sacred place in which respect for the land and its features was to be strictly maintained. Humans were created by a higher power that was sometimes referred to as ‘God’, ‘The Creator’ or ‘The Great Mystery’” (72). Thus all the tribes stick to their beliefs by sharing spiritual connection with animals and landforms. “The connection stemmed from a belief that the animals and landforms were manifestations of actual spirits; a spiritual concept known as ‘Hierophany’” (Versluis 33).

Columbus’s expedition to America paved way for European colonialism. Europeans brought along with them new deadly diseases like small pox and measles. These new diseases were contagious that it spread to most of the Native Americans and wiped out the population of Native people in many states. Europeans invaded Americas to improve their economic status by expanding the farmland and create new opportunity to the populated Europeans. In the process of expanding farmland, they fought with the tribal people to acquire their home land. Native people were completely shattered by the cultural shock. Native people had great reverence for their land, so losing their land traumatized them to a great extent. Many factors favoured Europeans to invade the Native land. The first one is that their immune system helped them fight the deadly diseases unlike Native

people. The second factor is that the Europeans were well equipped with guns and horses which made the battle easier as the Native people used only handmade weapons. The last factor is that the European population outnumbered the Native people. Eventually Europeans confiscated the Native people's land and made them lose their sense of belongingness. In spite of protesting, Native people were made to surrender their land and they were forcibly relocated to other places. In addition to that Native children were forcibly sent to boarding school in order to erase their tradition and to inculcate western traditional practices. "Children were also victim to the colonialist strategy of cultural domination, even when they were considered less of a threat to mainstream colonial culture. They were forbidden to converse in their native languages, a stratagem to eradicate any trace of their original culture" (Palmiste 79).

The cultural shock psychologically affected the Native people. They were forced to disown their native self in order to assimilate with the new language and educational system which resulted in giving up their own cultural identity. According to Native people, spirituality means to live in harmony with nature. The forcible relocation from their sacred land broke their spiritual connection that they had with their land. As native people started to assimilate into western culture, they stopped practicing their rituals which paved way for identity crisis. "Respondents here have demonstrated that completion of the road will completely frustrate the practice of their religion will virtually destroy respondents religion, and will necessarily force them into abandoning these practices altogether" (Versluis 36). Due to the oppressive measures of colonizers the native people lost their rights over their land. Yet they strived hard to maintain their cultural values and practices.

At present, Native Americans feel that ecosystem in their reserve might be endangered and their cultural practices might get impaired due to the rise of tourism. Tourists join Native people in their traditional festivals and take photos but according to Native American culture, photos are forbidden. At times tourists may fail to show respect to their culture and ritual practices. “Misinterpretation, decontextualization, and popularization of native ceremonies [are causing] serious disruptions in local practice” (Niezen 7). The new age spiritualists who want to know more about Native traditions are at one end and the researchers who conduct weekend workshops are on the other end in disturbing Native lifestyle. “The New Age movement, in this view, becomes one more form of spiritual intrusion, one more process of ritual desecration, of self-conscious appropriation and alteration of the spiritual lives of native people” (Niezen 7).

Native American Literature includes the oral and written literature of indigenous culture of North America. Native American Literature began to discuss about certain issues that concerns Native American culture, practices, identity, oppression, relocation, history, cultural clash and folklore. Though Native people are scattered all over North America and South America, the word Native American Literature or American Indian Literature signifies the indigenous people of the U.S.A and Canada. In Canada it is called as First Nations Literature. Native American Literature began with oral myths and tales of Indian culture. There was no written literature until European invasion. Before the Europeans arrival, Native people had their own way of worshipping nature, animals and the universe. Their stories glow with respect for nature which is considered as a spiritual one. The initiation of oral tradition has a great impact even today among Native people as it helps them understand the meaning of their ritual practices. Oral literature serves as a tool to preserve their culture.

After European invasion, the first written works of Native Americans were transcribed speeches and treaties with the colonizers. Today the oral literature is developed into various literary forms among which songs and stories are popular. Songs are composed by the native people include their traditional practices. Most of the songs are sung during ritual ceremonies accompanied by a dance. Before colonization, Native people recorded their important events through pictographs. During nineteenth century Native American writers adopted the autobiographical genre from Euro-American literary forms. Most of the nineteenth century Native American authors who wrote their autobiographies were educated in mission schools formed especially for Native children by the missionaries.

Samson Occom and William Apess voiced out the Native people's oppression through their works. *A Son of the Forest: The Experience of William Apess, a Native of the Forest* was the first Native American autobiography. In his autobiography, William Apess has depicted his abusive childhood and difficulty he faced in the residential school run by Methodist church. *Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul, an Indian* by Samson portrayed the destruction of Native people due to the introduction of alcohol. Nineteenth century was a transition period for the Native American Literature as the authors started writing novels in English. They merged their traditional narratives techniques by including the symbol of the trickster and creation myth stories in the modern novels they wrote. In the beginning stage, the Native authors found it difficult to voice themselves amidst the American authors who depicted Indians in a stereotypical way but later they proved that such depictions to be wrong. When Thomas King was asked in an interview about the non-native writers who write about Indians, he replied, "Today, Indians sort of have become the flavor of the month. You have all these writers jumping on the bandwagon

and writing about Indians because it's going to sell. I find that offensive. I can't say to them, "Don't do it" or "You shouldn't be doing that". But I find that offensive, very offensive" (Rooke 63).

The first novel in Native American literature was written by S. Alice Callahan who belongs to Creek tribe. Her novel *Wynema: A Child of the Forest* was published in 1891. Many Native writers during nineteenth century focused on the history of their tribes. *Sketches of Ancient History of the Six Nations* by David Cusick was the first tribal history. Tribal histories mainly focused on the spiritual ties they have with their land. This spiritual ties gained special importance after the Indian Removal Act, 1830. The government signed a law for removing Southern Native American towards the west of the Mississippi River in order to make space for the Whites to settle. According to the Act, Native people were forcibly removed from their ancestral land. This left them with a great shock as they were uprooted from their land and had to go to an unknown place. Native Americans not only lost their land but also their people who protested against the government. Among all the relocations, Trail of Tears during 1838 to 1839 is considered to have affected the natives in a worst manner. Around eighteen thousand Cherokees were forced to leave their land. Among them around four thousand people died due to starvation and illness.

Native children were forcibly sent to the boarding schools and they were taught conventional American subjects. The Native children were punished for speaking Native language as a result of which, the children who returned after their studies considered their own culture to be inferior. This made the educated children detach themselves from their native roots.

The twentieth century writers focused upon the political issues concerning Native Americans in their literary creations. Zitkala-Sa is an early twentieth century writer who has discussed the Native people's struggle to reclaim their rights over their land through her works like *Old Indian Legends* in 1901 and *American Indian Stories* in 1921. Political writers like Will Rogers, a Cherokee and Alexander Posey, a Creek, John Joseph Mathews, an Osage and D'Arcy McNickle, a Cree and Salish, made use of humor to convey their cultural beliefs and the oppression they faced. In the 1960s Native writers wrote more about their culture due to the Red Power Movement. Red Power Movement is a social movement which was started with the motive to emphasize self determination, to protect tradition and identity, to secure their lands and to assert their rights to the government. N. Scott Momaday's *House Made of Dawn* won Pulitzer Prize in 1968. Momaday's Pulitzer Prize gained new recognition for the whole Native American Literature. This motivated many modern writers to produce more work on Native Americans. Vine Deloria's *Custer Died for Your Sins*, Paula Gunn Allen's *Sacred Hoop: Recovering the Feminine in American Indian Traditions* and Robert Allen Warrior's *Tribal Secrets: Recovering American Indian Intellectual Traditions* are some of the important works in this genre. Kenneth Lincoln, a critic named the period from 1960s to the present day as Native American Renaissance. The term Native American Renaissance was coined by Kenneth Lincoln in his book which has the same title. In this book, Lincoln attempts to explore the sudden increase in the number of literary works published by Native writers after Momaday received the award. Lincoln states that in the second half of the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s writers who won awards belonged to the first set of tribal community who received English language education especially in Indian Boarding School and received higher degrees from universities.



The most important contemporary Native American writers are James Welch, Eden Robinson and N. Scott Momaday. James Welch is a Native American writer born in 1940 in Browning, Montana. He is a well known author who belongs to the Native American Renaissance which started in 1960s. His novels include *Winter in the Blood*, *The Death of Jim Loney*, *Fools Crow*, *Indian Lawyer* and *The Heartsong of Charging Elk*. His notable novel is *Fools Crow* which was published in 1986. Most of his novels are set in Montana reserve and the protagonists are from Blackfoot community who are oppressed by colonizers.

Eden Robinson is a renowned Canadian author who belongs to Haisla tribe. Her gothic fiction is popular among literary community. Her works include novels *Monkey Beach* and *Blood Sports* and short story collection *Tarplines*. She is known for mixing traditional Haisla myth in her novel. Her novel *Monkey Beach* is about a Haisla community young girl who investigates the murder of her brother.

N. Scott Momaday is a popular author who belongs to Native American Renaissance period. He is highly regarded for his novel *House Made of Dawn* which won Pulitzer Prize. The protagonist of the novel suffers from identity crisis as she has to choose between the dominant white culture and tribal society. Through his writing Momaday tried to protect his Native tradition.

Thomas King is an American-Canadian author born on April 24, 1943 in Sacramento, California. He belongs to Greek, German and Native-American descent. His father is of Cherokee origin who abandoned the family when Thomas King was a child. Though Thomas King visited his Cherokee relatives in Oklahoma in his young age, he was raised in a small town. Most of his works are about the Blackfoot tribe. After graduating from

high school, Thomas King travelled abroad and worked as a photojournalist in New Zealand and Australia. Returning to the United States, Thomas King entered California State University and received B.A. and M.A. degrees in English. He completed Ph.D in American Studies and English in 1986 from the University of Utah. He started writing novels while pursuing his doctoral studies and teaching in Alberta, Canada. As a citizen of Canada and the United States, Thomas King has taught in both countries and acknowledges that Natives are his primary audience. He is the member of the Order of Canada and he retired from the University of Guelph and he was named as Professor Emeritus of English in 2013. He has won several awards like Governor General's Award for English-language fiction, McNally Robinson Aboriginal Book of the Year Award, RBC Taylor Prize and Order of Canada

Thomas King has written an array of novels, short stories, children's books and non-fiction. His novels are *Medicine River* (1990), *A Coyote Columbus Story* (1992), *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993), *Coyotes Sings to the Moon* (1998), *Truth and Bright Water* (1999), *DreadfulWater Shows Up: A DreadfulWater Mystery* (2002), *Coyote's New Suit* (2004), *The Red Power Murders: A DreadfulWater Mystery* (2006), *A Coyote Solstice Tale* (2009), *UFOs That Crashed to Earth* (2009), *Martian Fever* (2009), *Message From Titan* (2009) *The Back of the Turtle* (2014), *Cold Skies: A DreadfulWater Mystery* (2018) and *A Matter of Malice: A DreadfulWater Mystery* (2019). His non-fictions are *The Truth about Stories* (2003) and *The Inconvenient Indian* (2012).

Thomas King has written picture books for children which are completely based on Coyote. Coyote or Trickster is a Native American mythical dog. According to First Nations people Coyote is a sacred animal which heals other's problem. "In Native

American context, [tricksters] are not animals; they are first people... members of a race of mythic prototypes who live before humans existed... They had tremendous powers... and were also capable of being brave or cowardly, conservative or innovative, wise or stupid” (Smith 525). *A Coyote Columbus Story* is about a coyote which creates the world along with all the creatures. The coyote or the First Woman has the ability to control each and everything according to her wish until a funny-looking man named Columbus arrives. The funny-looking man has red hair and he changes the plan of the Coyote each time. He does not like the wealth possessed by the moose, turtles and beavers of Coyote’s land. This story satirizes the colonization of Native Americans.

*Coyote Sings to the Moon* is about an old woman who sings to moon everyday and the singing is accompanied by the other animals. One day Coyote plans to sing along with the old woman but other animals beg him not to sing as his voice is awful. Eventually the moon goes back to sky after hearing coyote’s song. *Coyote’s New Suit* is about the greediness of the Coyote. Coyote lives happily with his soft brown suit. One day Raven manipulates Coyote by saying that the suit is not the finest in the forest. Then Coyote keeps trying to borrow fur from other animals. *A Coyote Solstice Tale* is about a girl pretending to be a reindeer stumbles into a Christmas party at coyote’s house. Then the animals seek to reunite the girl with her family, but they end up going to a shopping mall.

*Dreadful Water Shows Up* is a detective fiction that focuses on the series of murders which is investigated by the protagonist Thumps Dreadful Water. The series is written by Thomas King under the pseudonym Hartley GoodWeather. First dead body was found and the police were not able to find any clue. Then a detective single handedly solves the case. *The Red Power Murders: A Dreadful Mystery* is the second part of the detective

series. The same detective from the first part comes as a person who documents about the author who visits the place as a tourist. Later the touring author turns out to be the leader of Red Power Movement. This is followed by a murder and then the detective solves all the mysteries at the end. *Cold Skies: A DreadfulWater Mystery* is the third part of the series. DreadfulWater is a retired police who lives in a small town in Chinook, Montana. Two people die in Montana disturb him, so he disguises and names himself as Sheriff to solve the mysteries. *A Matter of Malice: A DreadfulWater Mystery*, the fourth book of the series. DreadfulWater is a police who gets involved with a reality show that investigates the murder of a young girl some years before. Then the producer of the TV show dies in the same manner. DreadfulWater manages to solve two murder cases.

*Medicine River* focuses on First Nations people's culture which is inextricably connected with nature. The novel was published in 1989 and in 1993 the novel was adapted into a television movie starring Graham Greene and Tom Jackson. Will, the protagonist is of mixed blood and is a descendant of Blackfoot tribe. Will, who is raised in town later returns to Medicine River for his mother's funeral. Will's friend Harlen, convinces him to stay there and opens a photography studio. Initially he feels alienated from his family and friends but after meeting elderly people, he learns the purpose of life and feels the sense of belongingness. He helps Louise, an unwed pregnant woman and later he looks after Louise and her daughter South Wing. *Medicine River* depicts the history of First Nations community and their rich cultural values that connect them with nature.

*Truth and Bright Water* talks about the effects of cultural change. The novel *Truth & Bright Water* is set in the two towns, 'Truth' on the American side and 'Bright Water', a reserve, lies on the Canadian side and a river separates both the places. Thomas King

reveals that First Nations people pollute the land by building resorts for tourists who come for Indian Days festival just to get rid of their poverty. Through Mondroe Swimmer, Thomas King reveals political problems such as the destruction of native culture by the colonial legacy. The author also explains that colonial structures like Churches, boarding schools, museums and international borders have disrupted the lives of native people.

*Green Grass, Running Water* portrays the transformation of the lives of Native Americans due to imperialism. The construction of a dam alters the landscape which affects the Native people. The narrator brings two interwoven plots in which the story of coyote is rooted in the myth of the creation of the world and the story of the narrator is a realistic plot which depicts the day to day life of Blackfoot people. The myth of Blackfoot people regarding creation is repeated by four Indians. The woman protagonist in the myth is named as First Woman, Changing Woman, Thought Woman and Old Woman. All the four versions of stories have the same beginning; the woman falls from the sky to the earth which is filled with water. The four Indians who narrate myth are Lone Ranger, Ishmael, Robinson Crusoe and Hawkeye. They escape from mental asylum and travel to Blackfoot reserve in order to fix the world and to restore the ecological balance as there is an impending threat to the natural ecosystem because a dam is being built across the river in their native land, the Blackfoot reserve.

*The Back of the Turtle* is about a genetically modified bacterium that takes away many lives. Gabriel Quinn is a scientist who works for the multinational chemical company Domidion. Gabriel leaves the company as soon as he finds out the evil side of the defoliant, Green Sweep developed by Domidion and returns to Smoke River, where his mother was born. On his return, he is dumbstruck by looking at the deserted ghost town and realizes

that it is the aftermath effect of his own finding called Green Sweep. He feels guilty for destroying his own people and place so he tries to commit suicide but he is saved by Mara and Nicholas. Mara is an artist who has returned to the reserve alone after spending many years in Toronto and Nicholas Crisp, an old native man. Eventually the author ends the novel optimistically as turtles return to the beach which is symbolic that nature would revive itself.

The novel *UFOs That Crashed to Earth*, the first book of the trilogy is based on the recorded history of nuclear weapons. Thomas King throws light on the nuclear waste storage facilities which are highly dangerous to environment. He also brings in the UFO, Unidentified Flying Objects, phenomenon which is one of the biggest mysteries of all time. The novel reveals that the United States Air Force reverse engineer the alien technology which eventually paves way to the atomic age on earth.

Thomas King's *Martian Fever* is about earth's early settlements on the planet Mars from the year 2025 and beyond. The novel is also about a family with generations of descendants who have a very special gift of precognition or the unique ability to see into future is passed on from generation to generation in the Miller family. Thomas King has given a glimpse of American Civil War and the destruction that took place during the year 1865. Then the novel slowly shifts to the future 2025 where the earth is burning due to manmade disasters. As the earth is reduced to an unbearable and polluted world, Mars is the only planet left for mankind's salvation. So the Martian colonialists find ways to survive in their new hostile world. Eventually mankind's greediness makes the new world, Mars an inhabitable place by looting all the natural resources as they did in earth. Eventually human kind has to seek refuge elsewhere.

The novel *Message From Titan* is the last part of Thomas King's science fiction trilogy. *UFOs That Crashed to Earth* and *Martian Fever* are the first two books in the trilogy. This novel is about people whose life is at stake as the pollution of nuclear fallout reaches its peak on both Earth and Mars. So the United Space Agency looks to Titan, the largest moon of the planet Saturn where water, ice and atmosphere favors mankind to seek refuge. The voyage to Titan encompasses travelling from Earth orbit to moon, then to Mars and finally to Titan. Titan is billion kilometers away from earth and it is not visible to the naked eye but it is the only hope for people who live on the dying Earth and the polluted Mars. With the help of an alien note, they travel in light speed and discover a new star system named Alpha Centauri. Before stepping into the new planet, they take an oath saying that they will protect the new planet.

Thomas King's themes are the history of the exclusion of Native Americans from White society, the characteristics of native culture which is intricately connected with nature, the damage caused to the ecosystem by scientific and technological developments. Thomas King's works focuses on the interrelationship between culture and environment. Thomas King reveals the fact that mankind have deviated themselves from their cultural ethos which has traditional practices of protecting the environment.

The thesis aims to study the interdependence of culture and biodiversity; it focuses on the manner in which the process of modernization and assimilation of colonial culture has distanced the indigenous people away from their cultural ethos resulting in unimaginable threat to ecology. Mankind's insatiable appetite for power has paved way for ecological degradation and the technological dependence distanced mankind from nature. Thomas King reveals through his works that cultural practices establish the harmonious coexistence between man and nature.