

Anthropocentric and Ecocentric Representation of Human-Environment Relationship in Paulo Coelho's the Alchemist

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Abstract : The human-environment relationship has been projected since the beginning of literary tradition i.e. pastoral tradition, however, the interest of critics, writers and poets, in this view, has been developed, since the last couple of decades because of the increasing scope of environmental studies and growing environmental issues. One such novel, that projects human-environment relationship, is 'The Alchemist.' It is Paulo Coelho's one of the most read novels. It holds a central theme that the universe conspires to help a person achieve his destiny, projecting anthropocentrism and human domination by centralizing human and devaluing the intrinsic worth of ecosystem. However, ecocritical analysis of the text reveals that the novel contains, at several instances, ecocentrism as well e.g. 'everything on earth is being continuously transformed because earth is alive.' This portrays ecosphere as living and dynamic entity rather than a mere instrument for human to achieve his destiny. The idea that the universe shares the same language projects unity of nature showing the relationship between human and non-human aspects of the environment as one being and not separate or superior to one another. It depicts human as a part of the environment and not the lord of the world. Therefore, it can be concluded that the novel oscillates between both the ecocentric and the anthropocentric phenomena. It is not suggested, however, that one phenomenon should be valued over the other but that the complexities of both the phenomena should be recognized, acknowledged and valued in order to encourage the interactions between literature and environment.

Keywords : anthropocentrism, ecocentrism, ecocritical analysis, human-environment relationship

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